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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME/UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND, THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND AND THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

Annual report of the United Nations Population Fund to the Economic and Social Council

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Part one

FOLLOW-UP TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 44/211, 47/199 AND 50/120

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report has been prepared in response to General Assembly resolutions 44/211, 47/199 and 50/120, which request the executive heads of the funds and programmes to submit a yearly progress report to their governing bodies on measures taken and envisaged for the implementation of these resolutions.

II. COORDINATION

A. Resident Coordinator system

2. UNFPA continues to participate in efforts to strengthen the Resident Coordinator system, in particular through its directives to UNFPA country offices and through regular exchange with United Nations development partners, primarily through the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP). In follow-up to discussions at the JCGP High-Level Meeting in March 1995, the Executive Director undertook to obtain more specific information from UNFPA country offices about the functioning of the system in their respective countries of assignment. The review from offices covering more than 45 countries confirmed the many benefits of the Resident Coordinator system and the progress made over the past year in strengthening coordination arrangements.

3. The majority of offices considered the Resident Coordinator system to be most effective in fostering exchange of information through regular inter-agency meetings on a monthly or bi-monthly basis; the formation of theme groups or task forces dealing with specific issues, including education, empowerment of women, security, environment, and national development plans; collaboration in the preparation of the country strategy note (CSN); and joint efforts in the follow-up to the recent series of international conferences and summits.

4. The Resident Coordinator system appears to provide the leadership required to develop unified positions by the United Nations at the country level through the issuance of joint communications, statements or strategy papers. This aspect has received particular emphasis in countries that have recently undergone a major political transition or crisis. Still, while in some countries cooperation has extended to joint activities in selected programme areas, the review found that the further harmonization of policies and procedures would encourage a greater degree of coordination and collaboration. Moreover, joint activities, especially in the area of programme

reviews and evaluation, suffered somewhat from the limited contact that most United Nations organizations and agencies have with government units other than their immediate counterparts.

5. UNFPA country offices suggested that improvements should focus primarily on: (a) accelerating harmonization of policies and procedures within the United Nations system; (b) increasing advocacy activities in support of the Resident Coordinator system to enhance the understanding and commitment of Governments and donors; and (c) strengthening the Office of the Resident Coordinator through assignment of specially designated staff to assist in the logistics of coordination. UNFPA has given these findings serious attention and has shared the main points with the UNDP Administrator as well as with the Chair of the JCGP. The matter will be discussed further at the next JCGP High-Level Meeting in April 1996, along with the recent initiatives of the JCGP Sub-Group on Harmonization of Programming Policies and Procedures, chaired by UNFPA. UNFPA also seeks to help strengthen the Resident Coordinator System through the submission of highly-qualified candidates and the assignment of senior staff to the training courses offered to Resident Coordinators at the ILO International Training Centre in Turin.

B. Follow-up to major international conferences

6. UNFPA has been an active participant in United Nations system-wide mechanisms designed to achieve coordinated follow-up to major international conferences. For example, UNFPA has chaired the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the Implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), whose overall aim is to enhance collaboration and coordination of the ICPD Programme of Action at the country level, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator. It is also intended to develop a common framework for following up other United Nations conferences dealing with social issues. The IATF set up six working groups to address the key areas of action corresponding to the objectives of the Programme of Action: basic education, with special attention to gender disparities, with UNESCO as the lead agency; policy-related issues, with UNFPA as the lead agency; a common approach to national capacity building in tracking child and maternal mortality, with UNICEF as the lead agency; reproductive health, with WHO as the lead agency; migration, with ILO as the lead agency; and women's empowerment, with UNIFEM as the lead agency. The working groups have been efficient, preparing and disseminating a set of "IATF Guidelines for the United Nations Coordinator System" and developing a "Common Advocacy Statement on Population and Development".

7. The IATF, which has been cited as an example of efficient and effective United Nations cooperation, has recently been expanded to cover such related basic social services as health and education and reconstituted the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All with UNFPA as the chair. Its success has also inspired the establishment of two other task forces -- one on full employment and sustainable livelihoods, with ILO as the lead agency, and one on the enabling environment for sustainable development, with the World Bank as the lead agency.

8 Translating the ICPD Programme of Action into reality has been of critical importance to UNFPA in all of its activities. In order to coordinate the Fund's follow-up to the ICPD, UNFPA established an internal Task Force on ICPD Implementation that became operational in January 1995. In the initial phase of its work, the Task Force has been concerned with inter-agency follow-up and coordination, as well as with monitoring intergovernmental initiatives in the aftermath of the Cairo conference, as well as the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, in September 1995. The Task Force has also been developing a tool for monitoring the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action at the country level.

C. Coordination at regional and subregional levels

9 UNFPA continues to conduct various regional meetings and workshops and seminars to further coordinate the Fund's activities at the regional and subregional levels. For example, UNFPA's geographical divisions arrange meetings in conjunction with the Country Support Teams (CST) in their regions. These teams are part of UNFPA's Technical Support Services (TSS) system, which has been in operation since 1992. The eight CSTs are located worldwide to provide population programmes with technical services. As these teams are composed of experts from various population disciplines, technical requests are approached in a holistic manner and with experience drawn from that particular region or subregion.

10 Every two years, each geographical division and the respective CSTs organize a meeting between the CST advisers and the UNFPA Representatives of that region or subregion. These meetings review various issues with regard to programme implementation and coordination and how to provide technical services most effectively. Through the mix of participants, these meetings create an innovative environment in which the geographical divisions, CSTs and UNFPA's country offices can exchange experiences and discuss region-specific issues.

III. PROGRAMME MATTERS

A. Country strategy note

11 UNFPA continues to be an active partner in numerous CSN exercises. By early 1996, CSNs were in various stages of development in 86 countries and have proved to be a useful mechanism for fostering exchange and coordination among the different partners in development. UNFPA headquarters provides support to the process, emphasizing the CSN in programme-related training and stressing linkages to the CSN in policy guidelines, such as the Guidelines on Programme Review and Strategy Development (PRSD). UNFPA, as chair of the JCGP Sub-Group on Harmonization of Programming Policies and Procedures, is also actively involved in the new initiative on common

country assessments (CCA), which is designed, inter alia, to provide common inputs from the JCGP field representatives to the CSN.

12. However, the success of the CSN process depends to a large extent on government commitment and the political situation of a country as well as the degree of involvement of all agencies in the CSN preparation process. In several instances, for example, the CSN process was disrupted or delayed by political changes that affected the incumbent Government's ability to make long-term commitments made by the incumbent Government. As a result, UNFPA country offices reported that while the CSN process did increase coordination and exchange, more effort was required in creating a common development vision and in systematically establishing the programme implications for individual organizations and agencies. The recent review of the CSN process by the United Nations may assist improvements in this area.

B. Harmonization

13. The process of harmonizing the programming cycles of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, and WFP is well under way. As this process is a first step towards further effective and efficient programme delivery, UNFPA is fully committed to continuing such harmonization. Harmonized cycles will allow the various United Nations organizations to synchronize their programme cycles with national planning cycles, strengthen their collaboration at the country level and initiate harmonization of rules and procedures.

14. As of November 1995, more than 90 per cent of all countries in which the JCGP partners had programmes had harmonized programming cycles or were in the process of harmonizing them by the next cycle. Most of the remaining countries were committed to the principles of harmonization, but because of social and political conditions in the respective countries, their programming cycles had not yet been synchronized. The Fund's Programme Committee reviews the various country programmes and suggests how UNFPA's programming cycles can best be harmonized through extension, shortening or bridging.

15. UNFPA recognizes the advantages of simplifying rules and procedures in order to make programme delivery more cost-effective and to enhance national execution. UNFPA also recognizes, however, the complexity and difficulty in streamlining the various rules and procedures, as each organization of the United Nations system has developed and operated within its own context of mandate and procedures.

16. A first critical step towards synchronization of rules and procedures is the JCGP common country assessment initiative, which is intended to provide common data at the country level to all United Nations agencies and organizations including basic demographic, cultural and socio-economic information. Each JCGP member will contribute its own distinct perspective and experience in

carrying out the CCA. The results of the CCA should enable cost-effective as well as efficient planning and programme formulation, jointly carried out with national partners and the donor community. Once this process has been fully established, UNFPA will support further rigorous steps to harmonize and simplify rules and procedures at the country level.

C. Programme approach

17. UNFPA's strong commitment to the programme approach has evolved through years of recognition of its benefits and through the Fund's experience with its PRSD exercise. UNFPA also recognizes the many complexities in its total application. The Fund has been an active participant in system-wide efforts, primarily through the work of the CCPOQ, to examine and refine the approach. This effort has shown that a system-wide approach can be truly viable only if: (a) Governments are fully committed to define, negotiate and agree to manage from a programme approach; (b) all those involved at the country level are committed to adopting a single approach, not merely in principle but in practice; (c) common country assessments are carried out to provide input into programme approach assistance; and (d) multisectoral programme training is provided to all staff involved in the programme process. There is also a need for further work on developing analytical tools and instruments for planning and management that are driven by policies and strategies rather than by individual activities or budgets.

D. Common guidelines at field level for recruitment, training and remuneration of national project personnel

18. National project personnel are composed of nationally recruited project professional (NPPP) and general service support staff who are recruited to provide additional support to host Governments in the implementation of UNFPA-supported projects. NPPP is a category of technical cooperation personnel who provide technical skills not available to the host Government while general service staff provide related clerical/administrative support to the projects. These project staff are recruited and paid in accordance with guidelines common to UNFPA and UNDP for the recruitment and administration of national project staff. Their remuneration is based on prevailing compensation for comparable functions within the host country and is in line with rates paid for similar functions within the United Nations system. The employment of such personnel contributes to the strengthening of national capacity, particularly for nationally-executed projects, and makes full use of qualified national human resources.

19. A separate issue of concern is payment of salary supplements to government-recruited and -paid counterparts, concerning whom the members of the JCGP have collectively developed a common policy on remuneration. The policy is the result of extensive consultations among the JCGP members, which included both a field study and technical missions to four countries. The analysis found that the practice of paying different forms of financial incentives to such individuals was

widespread among donors. This was seen as a way to increase productivity and foster discipline and responsibility. The payment of such salary supplements, however, was found to pose complex problems for multilateral and donor agencies as well as for Governments. It instilled among such government counterparts the misperception that the payment was a right rather than a privilege, produced competition for such government counterparts; undermined government civil-service reform programmes; and led to poor monitoring and management of the practice. The analysis concluded that most cash payments have had a detrimental effect on the attainment of the overall objectives of technical assistance programmes, except in situations of extreme economic difficulties or emergency. JCGP members therefore agreed to eliminate such payments to government counterparts, except in exceptional circumstances warranting such payments, and have adopted a common policy towards that end.

E. National execution and national capacity-building

20. UNFPA continues to work to enhance the capacity and capability of national institutions to execute UNFPA-funded projects and programmes and to help strengthen the capacity of Governments to coordinate all population assistance in their countries. In considering national execution, UNFPA takes into account the particular stage of development of each country, its experience in planning and programming of population activities; the commitment, strength and viability of the supporting infrastructure, and the strength of national coordination institutions or mechanisms. The number of nationally-executed UNFPA projects is increasing significantly. In 1994, the Fund's expenditure for nationally-executed projects amounted to $52.4 million while the allocation for 1995 was $91.1 million.

21. In UNFPA's programming process, aspects of strengthening self-reliance are being dealt with mostly at the country level, for example through the inclusion of pertinent criteria in the background documents and the PRSD exercises that precede the formulation of a UNFPA country programme. These assessments of national capacity-building are complemented by regional and subregional reviews and initiatives. The current revision of the PRSD guidelines will provide further emphasis on the necessity for increasing and evaluating national self-reliance. UNFPA is developing revised guidelines in the area of national execution and national capacity-building, building upon the guiding principles set forth in document DP/1992/29, which was submitted to the Governing Council in 1992.

22. UNFPA is finalizing specific guidelines on the assessment of the capacity of national institutions. Moreover, the Fund is preparing an updated programme cycle document and training manual on UNFPA's programming process for use by field staff and government counterparts. Country offices continue to provide, inter alia, training to national project staff in accounting and financial management of projects, and government officials also participate, where possible, in periodic regional workshops on financial management organized by headquarters. In addition, UNFPA has promoted the greater use of national project staff based on Guidelines for the

Recruitment and Administration of National Project Staff. These initiatives are designed to further enhance the skills of national officials in the management of externally-funded projects.

23. In the context of the Fund's TSS arrangement, the first level of expertise to be used in technical backstopping are national consultants. When national expertise is not available, UNFPA's CSTs provide technical backstopping to population programmes and projects aimed at enhancing national self-reliance. UNFPA is currently revising its Guidelines on Technical Support Services and will ensure that the issues addressed in Executive Board decision 95/34 will receive even more emphasis in the revised document. Given the key role of national capacity-building in all United Nations development efforts, UNFPA continues to be an active participant in relevant initiatives of the Resident Coordinator system, the JCGP and other coordinating bodies of the United Nations.

F. Agreed division of labour

24. UNFPA's mandate is clearly set forth by ECOSOC in resolution 1763 (LIV) of 18 May 1973 and reaffirmed in resolution 1986/7. It was also reaffirmed by the General Assembly in resolution 49/3 and recalled by the Assembly in resolution 49/128. The governing bodies of UNFPA have provided guidance throughout the years as to how to translate this mandate into programme priorities and programme activities. The Executive Board provided such guidance most recently in decision 95/15, in which the Board took note of the Fund's report on programme priorities and future directions of UNFPA in light of the ICPD (document DP/1995/25 and Corr. 1), supported the broad outline of the future programme of UNFPA assistance and requested the Executive Director to concentrate the Fund's assistance in the core programme areas of reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health; population and development strategies; and advocacy. Decision 95/15 also requested the Executive Director to submit to the Board a draft mission statement for UNFPA based on document DP/1995/25, taking into account the discussion of the Executive Board on that report. UNFPA has prepared such a draft mission statement, which is being submitted to the Board at its annual session in May 1996.

IV. MANAGEMENT, PERSONNEL AND FINANCE MATTERS

A. Management audit and aid accountability

25. The main mechanism for the exchange and coordination of internal audit issues continues to be the annual Meeting of Representatives of Internal Audit Services of the United Nations Organizations and Multilateral Financial Institutions. At their 1995 meeting, the group discussed, inter alia, new approaches to enhance accountability under decentralization and reviewed the findings and recommendations made by the JCGP Working Group on Harmonization of Management Audit Systems upon the completion of its work.

26. At the same time, UNFPA management continues to employ mutually reinforcing means to promote responsibility, assess performance and measure results in order to obtain assurances with regard to accountability, especially in the context of UNFPA's policy on decentralization. Such means encompass: (a) overall guidance on policies and procedures, including the recent issuance of the updated Financial Regulations and Rules, issuance of the Policies and Procedures Manual, and circulars on audit activities and findings; (b) the system of annual staff Performance Appraisal Reviews based on detailed Individual Performance Plans and the convening of Management Review Groups; and (c) internal audit services provided by the UNDP Division for Audit and Management Review (DAMR) to assess the adequacy of internal controls and advise UNFPA management on areas in need of improvement. Internal audit missions have been greatly expanded, including the use of the UNDP Regional Service Centres in Kuala Lumpur and Harare, which provide internal audit coverage and accounts examination of all UNFPA offices with a resident UNFPA Representative in the Asia and the Pacific and the Africa regions, respectively. Moreover, internal audit issues are regularly discussed by the UNFPA Executive Committee, consisting of all senior staff at headquarters.

27. Two new mechanisms will supplement the traditional means for ensuring accountability. DAMR is planning to undertake simultaneous, joint management reviews of selected areas in the organizations that receive internal audit services from DAMR, namely UNDP, UNFPA and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The management reviews would seek to evaluate certain aspects of operations or common administrative services where greater efficiency could be achieved. The findings will be brought to the attention of the senior management of the three organizations for joint action. In the area of substantive accountability, UNFPA has instituted Policy Application Reviews that bring together a team of senior officers from UNFPA's Technical and Evaluation Division to assess the degree of compliance of country offices with relevant UNFPA policies and procedures. Review reports are addressed to the Executive Director who, in consultation with the UNFPA Executive Committee, decides on follow-up actions.

B. Training

28. UNFPA continues to be actively engaged in inter-agency collaborative training. Within the context of the JCGP Sub-Group on Personnel and Training, UNFPA is spearheading the inter-agency Advisory Group that has been established to develop a training initiative on the ICPD Programme of Action. This initiative aims at enhancing the skills of country office staff at all levels to integrate population concerns and sustainable human development into the country-level decision-making framework, both conceptually and functionally. Furthermore, the initiative will provide training on the concerted action to be taken by the JCGP agencies to achieve the goals of the Programme of Action. As such, it will serve to operationalize team efforts at the country level, reinforcing the training provided by the Turin Centre through its workshops for Resident Coordinators and other Senior United Nations System Representatives.

29. To meet the challenges of General Assembly resolution 50/120, UNFPA requires a cadre of managers and administrators who are flexible and adaptable and who are skilled in managing change. To create this capacity, UNFPA continues to conduct management training for its senior staff members on communication skills and decision-making, performance evaluation, strategies for change, team building and leadership. By the end of March 1996, approximately 90 per cent of the most senior staff had received such training. UNFPA has established performance criteria for all staff members that takes into account the work on competency definition carried out by the ACC/CCAQ Sub-Committee on Training. It is foreseen that further training in this area will be done in collaboration with the other agencies in order to develop common guidelines for performance appraisals of field staff, including assessing their contributions to inter-agency coordination.

30. UNFPA strongly supports greater collaborative training at the country level of all programming and managerial efforts to eliminate duplication. UNFPA recognizes that there are several difficulties given the varying rules and procedures of the different agencies. Through the JCGP Sub-Group on Personnel and Training as well as the Administrative Committee on Coordination/Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (ACC/CCAQ) mechanism, UNFPA will continue to work for greater harmonization and simplification of rules and procedures. To strengthen flexibility in conducting collaborative training at the country level, UNFPA has decentralized a portion of the training funds available under the authority of UNFPA Representatives to enable them to decide and approve local training activities.

C. Gender balance in appointments

31. UNFPA has for many years made efforts to increase the representation of women in its professional staff through external recruitment and advancement within its ranks. In order to be more effective in this regard, in the late 1980s UNFPA management sought the advice and guidance of a Sub-Committee on the Status of Women Staff in UNFPA (as part of a UNFPA Internal Working Group on Women, Population and Development). The recommendations that emanated from the sub-committee included a long-term goal of achieving a 50/50 representation of men and women in professional positions, an immediate target was set of having 40 per cent women professionals by the end of 1991.

32. In 1989, at the time of the Sub-Committee's involvement, the proportion of women professionals was 34 per cent. As of February 1996, the figure has reached 47 per cent. UNFPA has been able to make this percentage grow gradually. It should be emphasized that this has been achieved without compromising recruitment and promotion criteria.

33. Special attention continues to be paid to the placement of women to mid-level positions with decision-making and managerial responsibilities. Women are encouraged to participate in

management training programmes organized through JCGP, UNDP and UNFPA's own training programme. In the 1995 promotion exercise, twice as many women were promoted as men, two women were promoted to the D-1 level, out of the five promotions to that level.

34. Women have also fared well in UNFPA in moving from the general service to the professional category. For example, in the past 10 years, six of the seven general service staff to do so were women.

35. Another area that UNFPA has been working on is to dispel the notion that general service positions are "female" jobs. UNFPA has taken care to encourage the recruitment of more men to fill general service vacancies, particularly secretarial posts. While major strides have not been made in this area, there has been, nonetheless, a fair increase in the number of men recruited in this category of staff.

D. Decentralization

36. UNFPA continues to implement and monitor its decentralization guidelines and procedures seeking to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of programme delivery in the field. Since December 1993, UNFPA has substantially increased decentralized project approval authority from $500,000 to $750,000 per project, and has granted full decentralized approval authority to UNFPA Representatives on a pilot basis in 12 countries. In 1994, 80.4 per cent of the regular funds spent for country activities were made by decentralized authority.

37. An initial review of the Fund's experience in increased decentralization suggests that the process is leading to greater substantive involvement of field offices in project appraisal; a reduction in the time lag involved between project appraisal and project approval, thereby improving implementation and delivery rates; and an increase in the use of national experts in the formulation, appraisal and implementation of programmes and projects.

38. Further decentralization will have to take into consideration the capacities of field offices to assume increased technical, programmatic and financial monitoring and reporting responsibilities. To this end, the Fund is currently undertaking an internal management review of field-office capacities in light of future decentralization.

E. Common premises and administrative services

39. These issues are dealt with in section VI of part three of this report, on the follow-up to ECOSOC resolution 1995/51.

Part two

FOLLOW-UP TO ECOSOC RESOLUTION 1995/50: COLLABORATION WITH THE BRETTON WOODS INSTITUTIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

40. UNFPA and the Bretton Woods institutions, especially the World Bank, have cooperated at both headquarters and field levels since the early 1970s. There is, however, no formal agreement or memorandum of understanding on collaboration. Informal cooperation on a project-by-project and country basis has so far been the preferred form of interaction, especially on the part of the World Bank. This has not prevented the relationship from growing both in quantitative and qualitative terms over the years. Recent international conferences have added considerable momentum to the development of closer relations, which are also becoming more institutionalized.

41. Collaboration between UNFPA and the Bretton Woods institutions is evolving within two distinct settings. The multilateral setting brings together the institutions, UNFPA and other United Nations organizations and agencies in developing new and closer forms of collaboration, especially in the implementation of the action programmes of recent international conferences. The bilateral setting provides UNFPA and the World Bank in particular with a simpler and more direct route by which existing and new relations and forms of cooperation can be intensified and developed.

II. COLLABORATION IN POLICY MATTERS

42. UNFPA reported to the Governing Council on its collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions in March 1993 (document DP/1993/34). Since then a number of significant events and developments affecting both the nature and volume of collaboration have taken place. These include initiatives taken by the Secretary-General, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and various joint activities stemming from these initiatives aimed at coordinated implementation of the action programmes of recent international conferences. In late 1995 the World Bank established a position of Vice President of the World Bank for United Nations Affairs, thereby ensuring that its relations with the United Nations system would receive the necessary consideration by the highest management level in the Bank.

43. The drive towards more collaboration and coordination led to the establishment of a Working Group on strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods Institutions at a meeting on 1-2 June 1995 of senior officials of various United Nations bodies. The Working Group, composed of officials of DESIPA, UNCTAD, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS and DPCSD and chaired by the Associate Administrator of UNDP, reviewed existing arrangements for cooperation, identified areas that could benefit from increased cooperation, surveyed potential difficulties and

obstacles, and prepared a set of recommendations for the meeting of senior officials on 16 February 1996.

44. The priority areas for cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions proposed by the Working Group are: (a) collaboration in countries facing special situations requiring major reconstruction, rehabilitation and re-establishment of normal economic activity; (b) exchange of information and data for policy analysis in key areas; (c) exchange of information on planned research and policy issues; (d) strengthened cooperation on such policy issues as poverty reduction, financing and investment for development, social aspects of structural adjustment, assistance for Africa, implications of globalization for developing and developed countries, and environment and sustainable development; (e) enhanced collaboration and exchange of information in relation to the formulation of country strategy notes, common country assessments, policy framework papers, and country assistance papers; and (f) reporting to respective and relevant intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

45. UNFPA participates with the Bretton Woods institutions in a number of ACC subsidiary bodies and other bodies at the inter-agency level specifically set up to coordinate the system-wide response to the action programmes of recent international conferences. These include the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD), which coordinates the follow-up to Agenda 21, and the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on the Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Having been given a more inclusive mandate the IATF has been renamed the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All.

46. The main focus of the IATF has been to enhance collaboration between institutions at the country level. To this end, the Task Force, as noted, has prepared and disseminated a set of "IATF Guidelines for the United Nations Resident Coordinator System" and developed a "Common Advocacy Statement on Population and Development". The Guidelines in particular addressed some of the key policy questions of the ICPD Programme of Action including reproductive health, women's empowerment, a common approach to national capacity-building in tracking child and maternal mortality, and basic education with special attention to gender disparities. Though "not meant to be prescriptive ... and not hinder individual agencies or organizations from pursuing their respective mandates ... [the Guidelines] will enhance the complementarity of agencies' programmes ... and facilitate more integrated planning and coordination".

47. The work in the IATF has afforded the participants, including UNFPA and the World Bank, an opportunity to accommodate and adjust their views on and approaches to important policy questions and reach the degree of agreement necessary for effective system-wide assistance to countries involved in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action. The IATF has in fact functioned very well and has encountered at this stage few if any problems in collaboration.

48. Bilateral collaboration between UNFPA and the World Bank in particular has developed considerably over the last four years. Annual meetings between the heads of the two organizations have now been going on for long enough to acquire the status of "custom". Within UNFPA, these meetings are important in both programmatic and operational terms. The regularity of meetings at the divisional level is somewhat less than at the level of heads of organizations but nevertheless significant. These meetings are used to survey developments within the respective regions and to identify countries and issues that may need special attention.

III. COLLABORATION IN OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

49. It is UNFPA's intention to continue to strengthen relations with the Bretton Woods institutions and especially to form new relations in those areas where few or none exist today. By building on existing structures, UNFPA hopes to institutionalize relations at the divisional and country levels to a greater degree than hitherto and thereby avoid the fluctuations in relations that otherwise tend to occur.

50. In conformity with these intentions, UNFPA and the World Bank recently agreed that in those countries where the latter has already carried out comprehensive surveys and evaluations in the reproductive health and population sector, UNFPA would use these in its own planning and programming work in the countries concerned. An arrangement of this sort, which has potentially significant cost- and effort-saving dividends, is often important beyond its own terms because it facilitates the harmonization of approaches to and views on needs, priorities and policies and thereby strengthens conditions favouring increased collaboration.

51. The most extensive collaboration with the World Bank takes place in the Asia and Pacific region as well as in the Africa region. In the former, a number of new initiatives at the country level with contributions from both UNFPA and the World Bank have been launched since the ICPD. These include a World Bank project in India intended to operationalize the reproductive health approach at the state level. UNFPA will be providing complementary support for this project through district-level reproductive health projects. In Papua New Guinea, UNFPA enjoys a very good collaborative relationship with the World Bank, Australian Aid and the Asian Development Bank in a new reproductive health and family planning project begun two years ago.

52. In Africa, joint UNFPA-World Bank projects have been launched in, for example, Angola. Joint sector evaluation and programming missions have been undertaken in, among other countries, Benin, Chad and Cote d'Ivoire, and parallel funding for reproductive health projects is provided in Malawi and Zaire. In the Arab States and Europe, collaborative projects in such countries as Algeria, Egypt and Morocco are continuing, increasingly involving youth and gender issues. Gaza and the West Bank are new areas where UNFPA hopes to collaborate with the World Bank on reproductive

health. In Latin America and the Caribbean, UNFPA is working together with the World Bank and a number of donor countries in the Emergency Economic Recovery Programme in Haiti, and new collaborative possibilities are being pursued in a number of other countries, including Peru, Nicaragua and Colombia.

53. There are in all regions, however, still considerable intra-regional variations that range from frequent contacts and regular collaboration to one in which there are no contacts or common activities at all. A possible reason may be that the development of relations at the country level is to a large extent a function of local conditions and circumstances both inside and outside the local UNFPA and World Bank offices. The IATF Guidelines referred to above will prove helpful in overcoming these intra-regional differences.

54. In a number of countries collaboration might also be improved by emphasizing and adhering to a number of measures, each of which is modest in scope and effort, but the combined effect of which could be very significant: (a) better and more timely communication and consultation on new country programmes with a view to enhanced complementarity and the avoidance of overlap in project activities; (b) a more explicit use of each organization's comparative advantage in the design of programmes; and (c) sufficient advance notice in order to participate in each other's activities such as missions, workshops, etc.

55. UNFPA continues to work with the World Bank and other partners on the Special Programme of Research, Development and Training in Human Reproduction, the Global Initiative on Contraceptive Requirements and Logistics Management Needs in Developing Countries, and the Joint United Nations HIV/AIDS Programme. UNFPA is also collaborating with the World Bank on the latter's initiative for Better Health in Africa (BHA). Together with other United Nations agencies, UNFPA and the World Bank are also collaborating in the preparatory stages of the United Nations System-Wide Special Initiative on Africa (UN-SIA).

56. UNFPA's most important challenge in the time ahead is to carry out its mandate and to implement the recommendations of the ICPD and relevant parts of the action programmes of other international conferences effectively and efficiently. It is imperative, now more than ever, that UNFPA's bilateral collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions (as well as with other members of the United Nations system) continues to grow. Enhancing this collaboration is a task for which the Fund is committed to devoting all necessary time and effort.

Part three

FOLLOW-UP TO ECOSOC RESOLUTION 1995/51

I. INTRODUCTION

57. This report has been prepared in response to ECOSOC resolution 1995/51, which provided overall guidance to the United Nations funds and programmes on operational activities for development. Sections II, III, IV and V address issues raised in paragraph 7 of the resolution, which asks what steps have been taken to further refine and effectively provide procedures in these areas. Section VI addresses issues raised in paragraph 11, which invites the funds and programmes to explore the scope for improving the cost-effectiveness of their administrative services.

58. Resolution 1995/51 also requests the funds and programmes to give high priority in their budget allocations to the least developed countries (LDCs), low income countries, and Africa (para 2) and to take into account the specific needs and requirements of the countries with economies in transition (para. 3). UNFPA has indicated how it will address these important issues in document DP/FPA/1996/15, in which the Fund proposes an approach for allocating UNFPA resources to country programmes that gives priority to LDCs, low income countries and Africa, and that earmarks a specific proportion of UNFPA's country-programme resources to be allocated on a temporary basis to assist countries with economies in transition. The report, a revision of an early report that was considered by the Executive Board at its first regular session 1996, is being taken up by the Board at its second regular session 1996.

II. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

59. UNFPA has always accorded high priority to monitoring and evaluation. The present system is based on a set of guidelines issued in 1990 that adhere as closely as possible to those of UNDP. These guidelines are currently being revised in order to meet the need for simplification of procedures and documentation and, as a reflection of the post-ICPD programme orientation, to reflect a more holistic approach in analysing substantive programme achievements. An additional concern is to strengthen monitoring of qualitative aspects of programme delivery, which has been a noted weakness in the present system. The overarching concern is to ensure financial and substantive accountability at a time when managerial responsibilities are being increasingly decentralized to field offices.

60. A number of initiatives are being taken to refine techniques and tools to assess the impact and performance of UNFPA's programmes. An effort is being made to develop indicators for programme performance to facilitate monitoring of the achievement of ICPD goals at the national level. Related to this, issues concerning the evaluation of the impact of population programmes will be examined

with a view to developing indicators, data and information needs, tools and methodologies for such exercises. An important step has already been taken towards this end. The Fund has recently completed a conceptual exercise to develop a framework of selected indicators to assist countries in measuring the outcome and impact of their population education programmes. A technical paper addressed to national project staff has been issued. This paper outlines three major types of indicators and provides tools to measure each of them. These tools have been designed for use at the country level and can be adapted to particular circumstances.

61. In December 1995, UNFPA convened a consultative expert meeting on rapid assessment procedures (RAPs) and their application to population programmes. The meeting assessed, inter alia, the appropriateness of the use of RAPs at different stages in the programme or project cycle, the practical implications of quantitative and qualitative RAP applications, and the prospects for the utilization of RAP for the assessment of population programme efforts. Follow-up action in terms of case studies, development of guidelines and training will be pursued.

62. The foundation for proper monitoring, especially substantive monitoring, and meaningful evaluation must be laid at the stage of project formulation. In the process of simplifying the formats of project request forms and project documents, every effort will be made to ensure that the prerequisites for proper monitoring and evaluation, including clearly defined objectives, baseline data, and measurable indicators, receive due attention. At the same time, guidance and training must be provided to parties concerned with project formulation to help them conceptualize, articulate and address monitoring and evaluation needs.

III. STRENGTHENING NATIONAL CAPACITY FOR MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

63. Since its inception, UNFPA has provided support for the creation and strengthening of population planning and/or coordinating mechanisms at the national level, partly because of the newness of population activities and the absence of traditional ways to deliver assistance. Moreover, the cross-disciplinary nature of population issues, which include health aspects, demography and women's empowerment, results in the involvement of a variety of ministries, government agencies and parastatal organizations. For these reasons, a focus on improving coordination within Governments as well as between Governments and the donor community and other groups has been a necessity in the population field from the earliest stages of UNFPA's programme. Supported by UNFPA, an increasing number of countries since the 1970s have established population commissions or councils to spearhead the formulation of population policies, to coordinate all population-related activities and to channel financial and technical assistance towards those areas that have been identified as priority concerns. An analysis of the national reports submitted to the ICPD found that 98 per cent of developing countries reported having a central government institution responsible for national population policy and coordination. In view of these achievements and the discussions at the ICPD,

UNFPA is now focusing more on selective interventions to strengthen existing institutions and to develop the kind of mechanisms that can respond effectively to the recommendations of the ICPD Programme of Action.

IV. IMPROVING NATIONAL PARTICIPATION IN EVALUATION OF UNITED NATIONS OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

64. The principal focus of training in the area of evaluation is on strengthening national capability. UNFPA's Country Support Teams, which are designed to provide technical backstopping to Governments in the area of population, are instrumental in this effort. Concurrently, national programme staff stationed in UNFPA field offices will continue to receive training in monitoring and evaluation issues as part of their overall training in programme matters.

65. UNFPA has been exploring different modalities for conducting country programme evaluations. A deliberate effort has been made to involve nationals in such exercises. In order to elaborate and refine the methodology for country programme evaluation, the strengths and weaknesses of the various modalities and their applicability to different situations will be assessed. In this regard, full recognition will be taken of the need to ensure objective assessments while at the same time promoting a sense of ownership among Governments of the outcome of such evaluations and their commitment to use the findings.

V. PROMOTING GREATER COLLABORATION IN EVALUATION

66. Together with its JCGP partners, UNFPA has made significant progress in harmonizing evaluation policies and principles. In line with the proposal that specific agency directions be titled "procedures" with the overall multi-agency document serving as "guidelines", the 1990 UNFPA guidelines will be revised and issued in 1996 as UNFPA Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures. In so doing, the ongoing effort to harmonize procedures for and outputs of monitoring and evaluation will be kept fully in view. Specifically, the process of carrying out mid-term reviews of country programmes will be clarified, taking due account of the fact that increasingly such reviews are conducted as joint exercises among JCGP members to promote cross-fertilization and coordination.

67. As an active member of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation, the Fund will continue to contribute to strengthening evaluation techniques and tools. Some of the issues examined in the Working Group's last two meetings included participatory evaluation, monitoring and evaluation within the context of the programme approach, rating systems and capacity-building in evaluation. On an ongoing basis, the Working Group continues to explore possibilities for sharing databases, consultant rosters and evaluation tools as well as conducting joint exercises. The Fund has also initiated a collaborative effort with UNIFEM to assess progress made in main streaming

gender concerns in UNFPA's programming as well as conducting joint exercises in consultation with the JCGP and other coordinating bodies of the United Nations.

VI. SCOPE FOR IMPROVING COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

68. The improved cost-effectiveness of common administrative services, particularly at the field level, is being continuously explored by UNFPA. UNFPA's most significant collaborator in this endeavour is UNDP. Country-level arrangements have been modified over the years to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of both agencies, which has led both UNDP and UNFPA to increasingly fulfil the goals established in General Assembly resolution 31/170 that requested both organizations to closely collaborate and cooperate on operational matters. Recently, the two agencies agreed to further refine the UNDP/UNFPA relationship at the country level. Specifically, UNFPA's senior officers in residence (heretofore designated as Country Directors) are now designated as UNFPA Representatives. As such, they will continue to function fully as part of the United Nations Resident Coordinator system.

69. It is felt that the ongoing efforts towards accomplishing the objectives outlined in various General Assembly resolutions on operational activities (particularly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120) will be safeguarded and further strengthened through the increased coherence resulting from this change. Furthermore, the refinement in the present organizational arrangements will be accomplished within existing financial and staff resources.

70. Other opportunities for improving cost-effectiveness are being pursued. For example, as noted in the UNFPA biennial budget proposal (document DP/1995/42), UNFPA will: (a) further develop electronic-mail connections and data-transfer links between headquarters and the field as well as between UNFPA and other United Nations agencies; (b) integrate its field office database system -- the UNFPA Integrated Field Office System (UNIFOS) -- with UNDP's field office financial systems; (c) continue to make use of the UNDP Regional Service Centre in Malaysia and the newly established regional centre for Africa in Zimbabwe, specifically with respect to audit services; (d) present financial statements in a format harmonized with that of UNDP (and other ACC members).

Common premises and services

71. As of February 1996, two or more JCGP partner organizations are sharing common premises in 52 countries. In several of these countries, other United Nations system organizations (e.g., FAO, WHO, UNHCR, etc.) are also sharing common premises. Based on present plans to substantially increase the number of countries using common premises and services (in line with paragraph 47 of resolution 50/120), JCGP organizations would share common premises in at least 68 countries, mostly in LDCs, by the end of 1997.

72. In 1995 there were ongoing construction projects for common premises in 15 countries. Work was completed on four others (Cape Verde, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau and Sao Tome and Principe), and three of these premises are already occupied. In order to expand this programme, a draft proposal has been formulated and circulated among JCGP partners that foresees financial contributions from all participating organizations for staffing a joint management unit and funding its operating expenses. All four JCGP organizations with field offices have confirmed their participation. Harmonization of the future operational direction and policies governing the establishment of common premises and services is foreseen during 1996.

73. Common standards and guidelines for the installation of local area networks and information technology infrastructure were developed in 1995 and have been distributed to all UNFPA country offices. In this and other regards, UNFPA and its JCGP partners will seek to increase the number of common services in all locations where JCGP partner organizations cohabit in order to economize on common charges.

Part four

FOLLOW-UP TO ECOSOC RESOLUTION 1995/56: HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES

I. INTRODUCTION

74. The present report is a follow-up to ECOSOC Resolution 1995/56 and provides information on inputs by various agencies in the area of emergency relief and post-conflict reconstruction. The report highlights UNFPA activities in this field during 1994-1995.

75. Among UNFPA's many concerns is the need to address the often-neglected demand for reproductive health services of persons in emergency and post-conflict situations. Reproductive health care and family planning are vital human rights and health concerns of populations affected by natural or man-made disasters. Such situations pose particular dangers to women during pregnancy, childbirth or post-partum recovery. They also expose women and adolescents to greater risks of sexual exploitation, abuse and violence. UNFPA is concerned that these needs be addressed with the same urgency that is devoted to other aspects of emergency relief. To this end, UNFPA support in emergency situations is aimed at providing reproductive health care, in addition to safeguarding the reproductive rights of women and men.

76. Based on the principles and objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action, which were reaffirmed at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, UNFPA works towards providing assistance for the rehabilitation of repatriating refugees and towards linking such assistance to long-

term reconstruction and development plans In particular, UNFPA seeks to integrate reproductive health services into restructured primary health care systems

77. In 1994, UNFPA's promotion of human rights, including reproductive rights, of various populations groups led the Fund to broaden its policy and mandate in the area of population assistance to include emergency and post-conflict reconstruction periods In May 1994, UNFPA issued a policy statement outlining UNFPA assistance in emergency situations

78. Almost concomitantly, in June 1994, the Executive Board encouraged UNFPA to provide emergency assistance to the people of Rwanda, and to report to the Board at its next annual session on the measures taken to implement the Board's decision (94/25) The following year, in decision 95/14, the Board approved the Fund's continued implementation of decision 94/25, allowing for flexibility in the sectoral expenditure of resources from the third UNFPA country programme in Rwanda to enable the Fund to respond to the Government's evolving needs for reconstruction and development

79. UNFPA has, within its mandate, provided assistance to recent United Nations-supported, national reconstruction efforts in Angola, Cambodia, Haiti, Mozambique and Namibia More recently, it has helped craft plans for the national reconstruction of Rwanda, Liberia, Gaza Strip and the West Bank and is expected to provide similar support in the national reconstruction phase of Bosnia and Herzegovina

II ROLE AND OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

80. In providing population assistance during periods of post-conflict reconstruction, UNFPA is guided by the following principles: (a) that access to reproductive health care is based on the right to security of person and the physical integrity of the human body, as expressed in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and on the rights of couples and individuals to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence These crucial aspects of health and welfare should not be overlooked during the reconstruction phase following emergency situations, in particular, when attention may be focused on the economy, major national development institutions, infrastructure, and the telecommunications of the country; (b) that counselling and quality services meet the needs of the beneficiaries, through the design and development of culturally sensitive messages and services tailored to local traditions and thus acceptable to the groups to be served; (c) that the recipient community participates in all stages of programme design, implementation and evaluation, and that the interests of women, adolescents and other vulnerable groups be addressed throughout the development phase; and (d) that strategies for preventing sexual violence are integrated in all training of the staff of agencies involved in providing assistance

81. During the second half of 1994 and 1995, UNFPA provided assistance in support of human resource development and infrastructures, including local salaries, equip.nent, medical supplies and drugs in the population and health sectors. Technical and logistical support were provided with the view to ensuring that target groups had access to counselling and quality services for contraception, safe motherhood, prevention and management of STDs including HIV/AIDS, management of the complications of unsafe abortion, adolescent reproductive health and other reproductive heath conditions as necessary. All efforts were (and will continue to be) made to ensure that services are provided on the basis of informed and voluntary choice. Where necessary, UNFPA support is extended to address the psycho-social needs of women and adolescents suffering traumatic life experiences, including instances of rape and sexual violence.

82. Other areas of UNFPA assistance in post-conflict situations encompass population and development strategies and advocacy. These activities include the assessments of needs and the widening of the knowledge base by conducting research on population groups affected by conflict and, during the reconstruction phase, support for the strengthening of national institutions responsible for the collection and analysis of demographic and reproductive health data, data systems, and policy development.

83. Special attention is accorded to mainstreaming gender perspectives in all UNFPA-supported activities. In the area of human rights, UNFPA supports advocacy for reproductive rights within the overall framework of human rights. Advocacy includes awareness-raising among concerned groups on equal access to health care and on education as a basis for women's empowerment. UNFPA advocacy for human rights, concepts pertaining to humanitarian law, and gender perspectives will be integrated into the training of local and international staff working in emergency relief situations.

III. CAPACITY TO RESPOND

84. In accordance with UNFPA policy, the Fund channels its emergency assistance through agencies and organizations that deliver emergency relief programmes, including United Nations organizations, government agencies and NGOs. UNFPA considers extending such assistance, provided that the request is within the Fund's mandate and that the resources used are drawn from the funds available in the UNFPA country programme for the country concerned. UNFPA provides reproductive health counselling and services through the health care mechanism that is available during relief operations. During the period under review, several measures were taken to strengthen UNFPA's role in providing emergency support.

85. In November 1994, UNFPA established the Office of Emergency Operations, based in Geneva, to help the Fund plan, coordinate, monitor and evaluate UNFPA activities in the area of reproductive health in emergency situations. The Office, which is in regular contact with UNHCR, was instrumental in organizing an inter-agency symposium with UNHCR in June 1995 on

reproductive health in emergency refugee situations. The symposium was attended by United Nations and specialized NGOs active in the area of reproductive health. In conjunction with the symposium, UNFPA and UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate collaboration and maximize inputs of both agencies in providing reproductive health and family planning services and supporting advocacy activities to prevent violence against women. This led to the development of a "Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Emergency Situations", which aims to focus attention on an area of refugee rights and welfare that has been widely overlooked in the past, to offer guidance to field staff in introducing and implementing reproductive health services in refugee situations, and to foster coordination between potential partners in this area.

86. UNFPA capacity to respond to short-notice requests for support was further strengthened when, at its January 1996 session, the Executive Board approved a global contraceptive commodity programme under which UNFPA would establish a revolving fund to provide procurement services for the timely provision of medical supplies, contraceptives and logistics. The revolving fund, supported by multilateral and bilateral sources, would help create a stockpile of commodities and supplies ready for shipment. UNFPA already has in place, through the Technical Support Services system, a network of technical assistance with a pool of experts readily available.

87. Simplification of project formulation and the decentralization of approval authority and procurement responsibilities to UNFPA Representatives have increased the capacity for rapid response to requests for assistance in special circumstances. Similarly, the diversity of possible sources of funding (regional and country sources) as well as the capacity to manage resources under multi-bilateral arrangements help in assuring the necessary flexibility needed to respond in a timely way.

IV. RESOURCES

88. In addition to the resources available through UNFPA country programme funds, UNFPA will join its efforts with other agencies to mobilize resources from external donors as well as local communities in support of reproductive health in the context of primary health care programmes during emergency situations.

89. With regard to the reconstruction period, there is a need for greater awareness on the part of donors that reconstruction phases deserve a timely and effective mobilization of resources to the same extent as the post-conflict and emergency phases. Furthermore, forward-looking strategic planning during this particular period to ensure that activities are timely and foster progress in the development phase is crucial. The identification of partners, including local community groups that are able to assist in both the implementation and the mobilization of resources in support of this phase, will be one step towards building national capacity and assuring sustainability.

V COORDINATION

90 At the field level, UNFPA will work within the Resident Coordinator system, in harmony with the Humanitarian Coordinator and in collaboration with United Nations agencies and organizations, particularly UNHCR, but also with UNICEF, WHO, WFP and NGOs that have the technical and managerial capacity to execute UNFPA-supported activities. Special efforts will be made towards the identification and strengthening of national NGOs, when possible, for the implementation and execution of activities for the reconstruction programme under national authority.

91 At the policy level, UNFPA will continue to follow the guidance provided by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs' Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the United Nations body entrusted with formulating system-wide responses to specific emergencies.

VI EVALUATION AND TRAINING

92 Considering the unpredictable situations under which most United Nations humanitarian assistance is initiated, projects should not exceed more than one year in duration. Projects must be carefully monitored either by the UNFPA Representative, resident experts or CST specialists. Major projects are evaluated independently by UNFPA, and lessons learned are shared with UNFPA headquarters and field offices.

93 In its post-conflict and reconstruction programmes, UNFPA will attempt to integrate a built-in monitoring system based on the identification of relevant quantitative and qualitative output indicators and methodologies for measuring them. Accountability for quality programme implementation will be enhanced through a system of evaluation, as yet to be created.

94 Training programmes for UNFPA activities in emergency and post-conflict reconstruction should be designed by specialists in the fields of reproductive health and humanitarian assistance. Training programmes should be flexible and adaptable to local circumstances and the capabilities of local personnel. They could include such topics as the provision of contraceptives in emergency situations, and innovative services for adolescents, including the prevention and treatment of STDs, the prevention of unwanted pregnancies, protection against sexual violence and responsible parenthood. Wherever possible and appropriate, training of staff will be undertaken in a collaborative manner with ACC/CCAQ and JCGP partners.

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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME/ UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND, THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND AND THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

Annual report of the United Nations Children's Fund to the Economic and Social Council

SUMMARY

The present report responds to Executive Board decision 1995/5 (E/ICE/1995/9/Rev.1) on annual reports to the Economic and Social Council which sets out the format and content of that part of the annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF to the Executive Board which also serves as the report to the Economic and Social Council. It contains the following sections requested by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1994/33 of 28 July 1994: (a) a section outlining measures taken in the implementation of the provisions of the triennial policy review of operational activities (General Assembly resolutions 44/211 of 22 December 1989, 47/199 of 22 December 1992 and 50/120 of 20 December 1995); and (b) a section on activities and measures undertaken within the designated theme(s) for the high-level meeting of the operational activities segment. By its resolution 1995/50 of 28 July 1995, the Council decided that in 1996 the high-level meeting of the operational activities segment should focus on strengthening collaboration between the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions in the areas of social and economic development, at all levels, including the field level.

* E/1996/100.

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The present report further responds to Council resolution 1995/51 of 28 July 1995 which requests the heads of United Nations funds and programmes to report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1996, through their Executive Boards, on the steps taken to refine and effectively apply procedures for monitoring and evaluation activities, strengthening national capacity, improving national participation in evaluation and promoting greater collaboration in evaluation, as well as improving the cost-effectiveness of administrative services.

Finally, the present report responds to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56 of 28 July 1995 on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The present report reflects a common format agreed upon by the secretariats of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Food Programme (WFP). It takes into account views expressed by delegations speaking on the follow-up to decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council at the first regular session of the Executive Board in 1996 and should be read in conjunction with the reports to the Council of the other funds and programmes and the relevant sections of the annual report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council.

I. FOLLOW-UP TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 44/211, 47/199 AND 50/120

A. Introduction

2. During 1995, UNICEF continued implementation of measures called for in the series of triennial policy reviews of operational activities carried out by the General Assembly, culminating most recently in resolution 50/120 of 20 December 1995. In this regard, the Executive Director views the triennial reviews as a continuum, providing clear and consistent direction over a multi-year period, thereby allowing for the steady building on progress made in earlier years and for consolidated reporting on implementation of the series of related and progressive resolutions.

3. UNICEF, through its implementation of operational activities resolutions, has intensified collaboration with its United Nations partner organizations, both bilaterally and collectively, particularly through the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). In 1996, an ad hoc working group of JCGP members was convened to identify responsibility for action and follow-up to each provision of General Assembly resolution 50/120, assigning it, as appropriate, to individual funds and programmes, the United Nations Secretariat, JCGP, CCPOQ and/or ACC. In addition, the United Nations Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD), UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP, in another series of ad hoc meetings, have established a mechanism for ongoing information exchange; collaboration on reporting, including development of common formats and consistent databases; and the harmonization of Executive Board procedures and timing.

4. The Executive Director has sent an executive directive to all field offices and headquarters units, updating them on recent developments in the triennial policy review, including the provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/120, and providing practical guidance for further action on, inter alia, country-level goals and strategies, the programme approach, monitoring and evaluation, the resident coordinator system, common premises, harmonization, collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, emergency operations and reporting. That report was one of a series the Executive Director now prepares semi-annually to update field staff on developments related to United Nations reform, operational activities and the coordinated follow-up to international conferences.

B. Coordination

Resident coordinator system

5. The resident coordinator system is now an important element in the process of country strategy and programme preparation and mid-term reviews as UNICEF, in accordance with Executive Board decision 1995/8 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1), deepens the involvement of United Nations system partners to avoid duplication and strengthen mutual support. The resident coordinator system has contributed in some degree to the development of all 40 regular country programmes of cooperation being finalized for approval during 1995-1996, although the quality of such participation remains wide. The resident coordinator system also has facilitated the role of Government in coordinating collaboration between UNICEF and key United Nations partners in country - UNDP, UNFPA, WFP, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

6. UNICEF, along with its JCGP partners, is committed to widening the pool of qualified development professionals eligible for appointment as resident coordinators/representatives and to increasing transparency of the selection process, as agreed upon by JCGP in February 1994, as well as to assisting UNDP in defining country-specific requirements for resident coordinator vacancies. In December 1995, all UNICEF representatives received a "Statement on the Role and Functioning of the Resident Coordinator System" prepared by CCPOQ, endorsed by ACC and updating an earlier statement of 1989. The role and functioning of the resident coordinator system, including consideration of the issues addressed by General Assembly resolution 50/120, is an agenda item for CCPOQ at its March 1996 meeting.

7. As of November 1995, 9 of the more than 100 serving resident coordinators came from the pool of candidates outside UNDP. UNICEF had nominated seven candidates overall, of which two were serving. The remaining seven of the nine came from UNFPA, WFP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations. In addition, one UNICEF candidate was short-listed for a resident coordinator post. The Executive Director remains committed to increasing the number of qualified UNICEF staff serving as resident coordinators and is actively encouraging more applications from internal candidates. To this end, UNICEF is reviewing several measures: adjusting the UNICEF representative appointments cycle with a view to harmonizing it with that of UNDP; making resident coordinator assignments a regular part of the UNICEF career development stream; focusing nominations on those countries where programmes of basic social services have a particularly high priority; and sending greater numbers of UNICEF staff to UNDP/CCPOQ-sponsored advanced courses for experienced resident coordinators at the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organisation in Turin, Italy.

8. Within the resident coordinator system, and under the overall coordination of host Governments, UNICEF continues to advocate for the use of field committees and thematic groups to help guide the coordination of operational activities. These committees, when functioning well, are generally led by a representative of the organization technically and operationally best suited to specific themes and enjoying the confidence of Governments.

9. UNICEF considers that the resident coordinator system is generally working effectively and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/120. The few disputes arising at the field level are invariably due to differences of personality rather than structural problems, and JCGP members have now established more formal mechanisms to deal with those rare cases not resolved at

the country level. The training of more than 70 country coordination teams at the Turin Centre and subsequent in-country training have provided significant impetus to closer collaboration within the resident coordinator system.

Follow-up to international conferences

10. Follow-up to international conferences provides the United Nations system with an opportunity, for the first time, to collaborate system-wide in the development of significant new programmes based on shared values, goals and strategies and places coordination at the centre of the process from the very start. During 1995, UNICEF was an active participant both in the preparatory process for the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference for Women and in the conferences themselves. These two most recent conferences further reaffirmed the goals and strategies of the World Summit for Children and gave priority to the provision of basic social services, including, in interested countries, commitment to the 20/20 approach for the allocation of budgetary and aid resources.

11. UNICEF is active in the following four inter-agency task forces established by ACC to coordinate system-wide action for providing assistance to countries in translating conference outcomes into concrete national policies and programmes: Basic Social Services for All; the Enabling Environment for Social Development; Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods for All; and the Advancement of Women. UNICEF brings a cross-cutting multisectoral approach to the follow-up and has actively promoted the concept of clearly defined goals and the development of national plans of action for setting targets at the country level. The experience of the World Summit for Children has shown that national and subnational ownership, with clearly identified numerical targets, is critical to the successful follow-up of international conferences.

Coordination at regional and subregional levels

12. While UNICEF, at the regional level, continues to promote the exchange of information, conduct of workshops and training, and transfers of lessons learned and has close working relationships with relevant regional organizations, the focus on the country programme approach has meant that country-based activities enjoy preeminence. Coordination on regional and subregional levels is particularly challenging since each of the JCGP members has a different organizational structure and style for addressing regional concerns. Nevertheless, as the Girl Child Initiative of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation has shown, JCGP partners can act effectively where distinctive and operational intergovernmental organizations exist at the regional or subregional level. There is scope for more effective advocacy and support for social development issues in regional intergovernmental forums on key issues, including implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

C. Programme matters

Country strategy note

13. UNICEF, in accordance with the guidelines issued by CCPOQ in May 1993, has supported Governments in their development of country strategy notes (CSNs). By February 1996, 9 CSNs were completed and adopted by Governments, 8 were in final draft stage, 7 were available as preliminary drafts and 19 countries were expecting completion in the near future. With 43 more countries at a very initial stage in the CSN process, there were, therefore, 86 countries with an active CSN process. Six countries do not intend to pursue a CSN, and 39 have not made a final decision.

14. UNICEF field staff have received formal guidance underlining the importance the Executive Director attaches to the CSN process and have participated in training seminars held at the Turin Centre. There has been a significant commitment of staff time and analytical capacity to support Governments and the resident coordinator. For child-related issues in the CSN, UNICEF has found Governments frequently drawing on the national programmes of action (NPAs) for implementing the commitments of the World Summit for Children. In many countries that have embarked on the CSN process, the JCGP partnership has been enriched by being able to respond to an overall government-led initiative. Follow-up to international conferences can help to strengthen the substance of CSNs. Alternatively, UNICEF continues its support of national plans and priorities in those countries choosing not to prepare CSNs.

Harmonization: programme cycles, programming procedures and rules of procedure

15. There has been notable success in the harmonization of programme cycles. In October 1995, the executive heads of the relevant JCGP organizations - UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP - sent a common letter of reaffirmation to representatives in all countries that had achieved full harmonization of programme cycles, or would do so by 1999. An alternative letter, calling for further action, was sent to field offices in those countries that had not. At the time, 27 country programmes were harmonized, 45 expected harmonization by 1999, 24 countries were possible, and 8 were special cases where harmonization was unlikely. In December 1995, the executive heads of the JCGP organizations, in a common letter to field representatives, noted the need to sustain efforts at furthering collaboration at the programming level and called for the development of a Common Country Assessment (CCA). Aiming for an operative approach by 1997, the CCA is intended to provide a cost-effective and efficient method for developing a common United Nations data system, assessment and interpretation of trends, an essential step to the further harmonization of higher order programming procedures and processes, with subsequent action through individual country programmes. The UNICEF situation analysis, developed within the overall context of the CCA, will continue to provide the essential focus on basic social services.

Programme approach

16. UNICEF has had a country programme approach for some 20 years and remains at the forefront in this area. As other JCGP partners evolve programme approaches in accordance with their respective mandates, there have been useful exchanges of views at headquarters between UNICEF and WFP, as well as between UNICEF and UNDP. In several countries, there also have been locally initiated discussions involving UNICEF and other JCGP partners. These exchanges are most productive when responding to a government initiative in which the Government and agencies draw on a common assessment of the country situation and the Government itself has introduced a programme approach. It is likely, however, that the scale of adoption of the programme approach will reflect the extent to which all JCGP members have their own programme approaches fully developed and field offices have sufficient guidance and guidelines for engagement with each other and with government authorities. JCGP partners will continue to exchange information on programme approach training.

Common guidelines at the field level for recruitment, training and remuneration of national project personnel

17. UNICEF strongly endorses the use of national expertise in the development and implementation of country programmes. Currently, over 1,000 national Professional officers are employed by UNICEF, constituting almost 40 per cent of the total Professional workforce. Indigenous technologies are actively

supported by UNICEF and introduced into other countries as appropriate. Almost 50 per cent of the experts employed by UNICEF as consultants are nationals of the countries in which they are working. Scales of remuneration and currency of payment for national consultants are aligned with those used for national staff. JCGP has prepared a report setting out elements of a common policy for payments to government staff; a joint letter on this issue will go out shortly from executive heads to field representatives.

National execution and national capacity-building

18. National execution, through government and other national partnerships, has long been a cornerstone of UNICEF programmes as a means of ensuring sustainability and allowing for a timely phasing out of UNICEF involvement. This approach to programme delivery has worked very successfully in even the most difficult of circumstances.

Agreed division of labour

19. UNICEF programmes are developed and implemented in accordance with its mandate as defined in the UNICEF Mission Statement and the relevant decisions of the Executive Board, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. They are part of country programmes approved by the Executive Board and subject to the overall coordination of host Governments and collaborative programme reviews of the resident coordinator system. This system of mandates, reviews and oversight allows for complementarity of roles and avoidance of duplication among funds and programmes while still responding to the unique circumstances in each country.

D. Management, personnel and finance matters

Management audit systems and aid accountability

20. The annual meetings of the representatives of internal audit services of the United Nations organizations and multilateral institutions provide a useful venue for the exchange of views. However, UNICEF sees a need for further streamlining of the mechanism to ensure a clear focus on issues of common concern requiring joint action.

21. The JCGP Working Group on Internal Audit Services, having concluded its task and seeing its recommendations put into practice, is now disbanded; but the exchange of views on issues of common interest and networking on particularly sensitive issues continues as needed. JCGP partners now conduct harmonized and joint auditor training. UNDP and UNICEF have shared guidelines for programme audits and the format of annual reports. While internal audit cultures remain somewhat separate, JCGP partners are working actively towards closer harmonization of approaches, with UNICEF providing active leadership on management audit issues. All JCGP partners have adopted the standards set by the Institute of Internal Auditors. UNICEF has made use of contractors to perform internal audits and is reviewing the experience with a view to replication. UNDP, UNICEF and other programmes are reviewing several innovative measures for possible action: joint management audits in areas of common concern; joint reporting; and the development of common databases on audit findings.

22. As a means of reducing the burden on their own audit functions, UNICEF and other United Nations bodies, along with the World Bank and other international financial institutions, are moving towards the harmonization of procedures for enhancing the capacity of Governments to discharge their audit functions and responsibilities effectively.

Training

23. UNICEF is extending its training efforts in team-building and interpersonal skills, targeting primarily heads of offices and other managers within UNICEF. Team-building and interpersonal abilities will be included in a new competency-based system for the appraisal of managers and other categories of staff within UNICEF. The UNICEF approach will take into account the work on competency definition being carried out by other agencies, including UNDP, UNHCR and the World Bank. In the case of managers, the competencies to be assessed will include skills in the area of inter-agency coordination.

24. Training is provided for national staff, both Professional and support, in accordance with plans developed at field offices. National staff also participate in regional or global training activities and also may have access to study leave and other external training opportunities. National counterparts, whether from Governments or other institutions, generally participate in training activities together with their UNICEF colleagues.

Gender balance in appointments

25. In 1994, UNICEF reached its target of women in 40 per cent of international Professional posts and exceeded this in the case of national Professionals. UNICEF continues to strive towards the goal of gender equity by the year 2000, but the expected slow-down in the rates of retirement and external recruitment may delay achievement.

Decentralization

26. With programmes in 144 countries and more than 85 per cent of staff located in field offices, UNICEF is already a widely decentralized organization in terms of location. The authority for the programme cycle has long been delegated to the country representative in the field. The management excellence programme is examining ways to achieve greater functional decentralization and field accountability through the further delegation of operational and financial authorities. The Executive Director anticipates that this action will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of country offices in programme delivery and monitoring.

Common premises and administrative services

27. Common premises among two or more JCGP partners exist in 52 countries, with UNICEF participating in 27, and will be extended to at least 68 countries by the end of 1997, with UNICEF participating in at least 43. While the JCGP Subgroup on Common Premises has done considerable work in analysing the viability of common premises and overseeing their actual establishment, JCGP has now approved the creation of the United Nations System for Common Premises Unit. This will ensure a more orderly programme for the development and construction of facilities, increase the skills and professionalism brought to bear in this task, allow for a more rigorous analysis of all relevant costs and benefits, establish a more consultative process and realize organizational efficiencies. UNICEF remains committed to the maximization of the number of common premises within an overall process that gives due regard to cost-effectiveness, the equitable allocation of all related costs and the retention of an organizational identity required for successful advocacy and implementation of country programmes.

II. FOLLOW-UP TO RESOLUTION 1995/50 OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL: COLLABORATION WITH THE BRETTON WOODS INSTITUTIONS

A. Introduction

28. UNICEF has had a long and involved relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions, in particular the World Bank, centred on policy dialogue, collaborative programme development and implementation, project funding, the provision of supply services, participation in consultative group meetings and collaboration in technical working groups. UNICEF and the Bank have worked increasingly closely in recent years, and there are good prospects for even closer cooperation in the future. Accordingly, UNICEF continues to review its policies and procedures for collaboration with the World Bank based on a need to have a partnership of common interest and continued dialogue, to enhance system-wide coordination, to mobilize greater international and national support for country efforts to attain the World Summit goals for children and women, and to mobilize sufficient resources to achieve basic social goals set for the year 2000 and beyond, including through the 20/20 initiative. UNICEF recognizes the key role of the Bank as a major influence on policy formulation by Governments in the provision of multilateral funding and in overall resource mobilization for basic social services, primary health care, basic education, nutrition and water and sanitation, as well as in other priority areas such as Africa and poverty reduction.

29. UNICEF collaboration with the World Bank is taking place within the context of an overall strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions. In this regard, a working group composed of members from the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UNFPA, UNICEF, the United Nations Office for Project Services and DPCSD, and under the chairmanship of the Associate Administrator of UNDP, has reviewed existing arrangements for cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, identified development cooperation needs that could benefit from intensified cooperation, as well as potential difficulties and obstacles, and has prepared recommendations to strengthen cooperation.

30. The working group concluded that there were areas and activities in which there is cooperation and that it should focus its future work on those areas and priority issues affecting the greatest number of United Nations entities. These areas would include: (a) cooperation in countries requiring major reconstruction and/or rehabilitation; (b) exchange of information and data for policy analysis; (c) exchange of information on planned research and policy issues; (d) strengthening country-level cooperation and policy coordination; (e) enhancing collaboration and exchange of information in relation to CSNs, common country assessments and country assistance papers; and (f) reporting to respective and relevant intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions.

B. Collaboration in policy matters

31. UNICEF has enjoyed a long-standing dialogue with the World Bank on overall development policy issues as well as on sectoral policy matters. There is broad agreement on key overall issues such as the strengthening of efforts to meet human needs during adjustment processes, the need for an even greater focus on poverty alleviation and effective collaboration on statistics and monitoring. Both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have now accepted that protection of the vulnerable and poverty concerns should form an important part of adjustment policy. The World Bank has joined UNCTAD, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF in developing a common understanding of the 20/20 initiative. In November 1995,

the Executive Director of UNICEF was one of seven heads of programmes and/or agencies joining Mr. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, for a high-level discussion in Washington, D.C. (United States), on future collaboration between the United Nations system and the World Bank.

32. There are several issues deserving further discussion, including the balance and complementarity between a demand-driven economic approach to the provision of basic social services and a rights/equity approach, cost-recovery mechanisms for the provision of basic social services, the role of the World Bank conditionality in structural adjustment programmes and community empowerment. It is important that both institutions preserve their autonomy and integrity of approach and act under the overall coordination and authority of the Governments of programme countries. UNICEF will remain a "critical partner" on issues related to the survival, protection and development of children.

33. At the sectoral level, there are numerous ongoing joint activities involving the World Bank and UNICEF. The World Conference on Education for All (EFA), convened March 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, co-sponsored by UNICEF, the World Bank, UNDP and UNESCO, adopted recommendations for the rapid expansion of basic education and literacy, with follow-up through the inter-agency EFA Forum. The Inter-Agency Steering Committee for Water Supply and Sanitation meets annually to promote coordination in policies and priorities of the World Bank and United Nations agencies active in the sector, primarily UNDP, UNICEF, the United Nations Environment Programme and WHO. There is a regularly scheduled series of meetings by the UNDP/UNICEF/World Bank Working Group on Poverty Monitoring aimed at establishing an information clearing-house on country-specific poverty monitoring and analysis, strengthening the link between survey data collection and use by policy makers, and developing survey instruments for field experimentation. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, with participation from UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank, provides a model for multilateral cooperation focused on a key social and health issue. The Bank has provided particularly important support for the UNICEF/WHO-supported Bamako Initiative and is an active member along with UNICEF and others on the Task Force for Child Survival and Development, established in 1984. The World Bank, UNICEF and other United Nations agencies and programmes have joined in the development and promotion of the ACC system-wide Special Initiative on Africa for which the World Bank commitment is clear, strong and well articulated. With some 85 per cent of the resource requirements for the Initiative found in areas of the UNICEF mandate, i.e., basic health, primary education, water and sanitation, there is prima facie potential for substantive joint activities.

34. While lacking a single umbrella agreement covering operational collaboration, the World Bank and UNICEF have signed at least four bilateral aides-memoire/memoranda of understanding for collaboration on education and health in Africa. In addition, UNICEF and the World Bank have sent out several joint letters to field representatives in Africa and Latin America. The most recent occasion was in June 1995 when a letter was sent to African representatives on the subjects of policy collaboration and country-level collaboration. UNICEF participates regularly at World Bank Consultative Group meetings either as part of UNDP-led delegations or in its own right where it has a substantive contribution to make and/or at social sector sessions.

c. Collaboration in operational activities at the country level

35. There is good complementarity between the World Bank and UNICEF in field-level operations. The Bank provides a source of professional economic analysis and brings to bear substantial resources, while UNICEF provides extensive country-level experience, a capacity for advocacy and partnership

alliances, and proven field-based and low-cost programme interventions. The effectiveness of collaboration at the country level has grown in recent years, and there is now a variety of modalities for in-country collaboration in partnership with government counterparts: joint missions; collaborative programme identification and/or implementation; use of Bank funds to support UNICEF programmes; UNICEF procurement services for Bank-funded projects; and use of Bank funds for emergency programmes and post-emergency reconstruction.

36. In Zambia, the World Bank and UNICEF are working together with WHO and other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to support the Government's comprehensive programme of health care reform and to mobilize the support of bilateral donors. In Mali, the World Bank and UNICEF are working with the European Development Fund, Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (a German bank) and the United States Agency for International Development to improve health planning at the district level as part of an integrated health, population and water supply programme. This effort has led to a dynamic network of community health systems throughout the country and is promoting community responsibility for the resolution of common health problems.

37. In April 1996, UNICEF and World Bank representatives from more than 10 African countries, along with technical support staff, are scheduled to meet in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, to promote common goals in Africa through (a) identifying and clarifying respective policy and technical perspectives in health and education; (b) strengthening links between UNICEF and Bank implementation strategies, building on comparative advantages; and (c) increasing mutal understanding of UNICEF and World Bank operational procedures and processes. UNICEF and the World Bank have collaborated on Social Investment Funds in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras and Peru, as well as in urban basic services in Guatemala. The lessons learned are being applied to similar World Bank programmes in other countries.

38. UNICEF has used government contributions of World Bank funds to support implementation of specific activities in approved country programmes. In total, Governments in more than 10 countries have used over $60 million in Bank proceeds as contributions to UNICEF programmes in their own countries. In addition, UNICEF has provided procurement services of more than $120 million for World Bank-funded programmes in more than 15 countries. In emergency situations, the World Bank has provided grants to UNICEF - $7.0 million in Somalia and $10.5 million in Rwanda - for emergency programmes as part of consolidated United Nations system-wide appeals.

39. While UNICEF can serve as a catalyst to direct additional resources into social sector activities and provide appropriate technical support, there also will be a need to generate additional resources for approved UNICEF country programmes. UNICEF cannot use its own scarce general resources to provide programme support services sometimes required to ensure effective expenditure of World Bank resources. In addition, UNICEF must continue to operate consistently within its mandate and policy guidelines in compatibility with the country programme and the MPA goals; in accordance with its rules and regulations covering audit, financial procedures, procurement, recovery of overheads, etc.; and in the provision of effective monitoring and donor reporting. The role of UNICEF is not one of managing funds for the execution of World Bank projects, but rather one of collaboration and technical assistance in the development of programme policy and strategy, implementation, monitoring and supervision.

40. UNICEF has established an internal task force to review procedures for collaboration with the World Bank, particularly financial arrangements, and the Executive Director will keep the Executive Board informed on a regular basis of developments regarding enhanced collaboration with the World Bank. In addition,

UNICEF is studying approaches used by other United Nations programmes and funds to these same issues and will continue its active participation in relevant inter-agency groups.

41. There is considerable potential for enhanced collaboration with the World Bank. Policy dialogue, joint programme missions, collaborative programme development and implementation, joint working groups and participation in consultative groups should continue and intensify within a relationship of mutual respect and partnership. It is envisaged that there will be increased mobilization of World Bank resources into programmes to provide basic social services through activities that are well planned, coordinated, sustainable and subject to appropriate monitoring and evaluation. All cooperation with the Bank at field level must be tripartite in nature, with Governments responsible for the overall lead and direction and recognizing respective comparative advantages.

III. FOLLOW-UP TO RESOLUTION 1995/51 OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

A. Introduction

42. UNICEF has placed high priority on implementing the provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/51 of 28 July 1995, taking into account General Assembly resolutions 48/162 of 20 December 1993, 45/206 of 21 December 1990 and 46/151 of 18 December 1991. The Executive Director already has reported elsewhere on how many of its provisions were taken into account, and therefore, the current submission is focused on issues related to monitoring and evaluation.

B. Monitoring and evaluation

43. During 1995, the Evaluation and Research Office of UNICEF, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/199 of 22 December 1992, continued its emphasis on (a) strengthening country-level capacity for the conduct of evaluations; (b) carrying out regional thematic analyses in coordination with regional offices; and (c) initiating global evaluations and research. At the country level, all field offices received an executive directive reaffirming the key role of evaluations as an integral part of country programme planning and giving instructions for improved planning of evaluations and making use of lessons learned. Each country office was instructed to adopt and implement an integrated monitoring, evaluation and research plan as part of the country programme. As part of the country review process, field offices are required to identify problems and undertake appropriate remedial action. Country office efforts during 1995 were focused on measuring attainment of the mid-decade goals, including the strengthening of national capacities for such measurement. All country offices provided inputs to a global evaluation database of UNICEF programmes, prepared as a CD-ROM containing over 6,000 evaluations and studies completed since 1987. This was distributed to all offices and main partners in other United Nations organizations.

44. Monitoring and evaluation officers in regional offices focused their efforts on providing support and training to country offices. Several regional workshops were conducted to improve skills. Regional thematic evaluations considered experiences gained and lessons learned in subjects of specific interest in particular regions and covered a diverse range of topics: health systems revitalization; water, sanitation and guinea worm eradication; education and child rights; successful programmes in nutrition; psycho-social programmes; and alternative forms of basic education for special groups. These evaluations

will contribute to improving the design of future country-level programmes in sectors under review.

45. Global thematic evaluations included a joint study with ATD-Fourth World, an international NGO, identifying appropriate programme strategies for reaching the poorest of the poor. A global evaluation of emergency management revealed considerable improvement since the previous assessment in 1991 and identified further areas for streamlining of emergency procedures. The UNICEF Evaluation and Research Office, jointly with the Harvard Centre for Population Studies, organized a major workshop on the development of strategies for the sustainability of the mid-decade and year 2000 World Summit goals. UNICEF worked with the Population Council to evaluate the role of males and fathers in families as part of achieving gender equality, including a global seminar at the Innocenti Centre (Florence, Italy) to disseminate the results. The subsequent reports are now used throughout UNICEF in the development of new country programmes. A global evaluation of lessons learned from the universal child immunization (UCI 1990) programme provided key input into the process of ensuring sustainability of results achieved. A global study of experience with the Bamako Initiative, including case studies in nine countries, is identifying the best practices and lessons learned and will be finalized in 1996 for distribution to all relevant field offices.

46. UNICEF continued its development of a system for performance assessment to measure more precisely the real achievements of programmes and projects. A prototype is now ready for testing in a limited number of field offices. Based on the experiences of seven country offices, UNICEF has improved its guidelines for country programme evaluations. UNICEF also has a history project to maintain a corporate memory of the organization, including the archiving of important historical documents on policies, Executive Board decisions, monographs of important programme subjects and records of oral interviews with retiring key staff.

C. Strengthening national capacity for management and coordination of international assistance

47. UNICEF recognizes that the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of its operational activities are functions of the capacity of institutions in the programme country to manage the development process effectively and to integrate external support into the national plans. Activities to strengthen such national capacity are an integral part of UNICEF-supported country programmes.

D. Improving national participation in the evaluation of United Nations operational activities

48. UNICEF attaches high priority to national participation in the evaluation of UNICEF-supported programmes and projects. A basic principle of evaluation methodology is that participation in the evaluation of programmes by counterparts in national Governments and subnational institutions is essential for ensuring that the recommended programme corrections and improvements are implemented. In general, the terms of reference for evaluations and operational research undertaken by UNICEF field offices include national participation as an essential element.

E. Promoting greater collaboration in evaluation

49. UNICEF is an active participant in three forums used for inter-agency collaboration on evaluations. The recent report of the JCGP Working Group on Evaluation and Monitoring entitled "Harmonization of monitoring and evaluation" provides the basis for JCGP members to harmonize product formats so as to ensure

a common understanding of concepts and to facilitate the ready sharing of information. The work of this group focuses on project evaluation policies, procedures and products; programme evaluation policies, concepts, terminology and products; and monitoring products for both projects and country programmes. JCGP members also have identified specific and tangible measures to intensify cooperation among them, including the establishment of a system giving each agency computerized access to the evaluation databases of the others, the establishment of a joint consultant roster, joint training in evaluation techniques and the holding of joint evaluation missions.

50. The Inter-Agency Working Group for Evaluation, an informal gathering of the heads of all United Nations system evaluation offices, met in November 1995 to review several important issues: (a) harmonization of monitoring and evaluation in the United Nations system; (b) evaluation of the functioning of multilateral banks; (c) monitoring and evaluation capacity of programme countries; (d) evaluation databases; and (e) experiences with rating systems. Participating organizations are now applying the lessons learned from these reviews. The ACC Subcommittee on Rural Development met in April 1995 to address gender issues in evaluation. It adopted a gender framework for application to future evaluations, and JCGP partners continue the elaboration of common evaluation frameworks for other sectors. This subcommittee meets consecutively with the meeting of the evaluation offices of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, providing an opportunity for productive interaction and the exchange of views on issues of common concern.

F. Scope for improving the cost-effectiveness of administrative services

51. UNICEF is using the introduction of common premises to join with other United Nations partners in promoting optimum effectiveness of administrative services through the introduction of shared services wherever practical and cost-effective. A review of the experiences of introducing shared services in an entirely new facility provided by the Government of South Africa, carried out in collaboration with JCGP partners, can provide the basis of improved guidelines, including a more equitable system of assigning costs.

IV. FOLLOW-UP TO RESOLUTION 1995/56 OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL: HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES

A. Introduction

52. The Executive Director has undertaken a review of UNICEF humanitarian activities, focusing on issues concerning its role and operational responsibilities, as well as the operative and financial capacities to respond, within the UNICEF mandate, in the context of broad and comprehensive humanitarian programmes, bearing in mind section VII of the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182 and the indicative list of issues contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56 of 28 July 1995. UNICEF is participating actively in the inter-agency task force led by the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) and reviewing inter-agency coordination and capacities in the humanitarian sector.

53. UNICEF also has been consulting with the Executive Board on the indicative list of issues annexed to the Council resolutions, and most were discussed at the first regular session of the Board in January 1996. As a basis for that discussion, UNICEF presented two complementary papers, "UNICEF emergency services: mission and strategies" (E/ICEF/1996/4) and "UNICEF emergency

operations" (E/ICEF/1996/7), outlining the role of UNICEF in emergencies. In accordance with Executive Board decision 1996/2 (E/ICEF/1996/12 (Part I)), UNICEF will present a two-paged conceptual framework, including the guiding principles for UNICEF emergency interventions, to the Executive Board at its annual session in June 1996. UNICEF also will present to subsequent sessions of the Board during 1996 and 1997 operational papers on the following issues: (a) rapid response capacity; (b) capacity-building; (c) coordination; (d) niche and comparative advantage; (e) prevention and preparedness; (f) protection of children in conflict situations; (g) emergency processes; and (h) balance between long-term development and emergency assistance. These items are closely interrelated with the indicative list of issues included in resolution 1995/56, and the Executive Board, in its discussions, took these into account in providing its considered views.

B. Role and operational responsibilities in humanitarian assistance

54. The Executive Board, while seeking a clear definition of emergencies, urged UNICEF to respond to all kinds of emergencies, including "silent" and "forgotten" emergencies. The importance of preventive actions was emphasized to prevent "silent" emergencies from becoming "loud" ones. The Board endorsed measures to strengthen preventative actions, including stand-by arrangements and emphasis on sustainable development strategies. The Executive Board also sought clarification on how the UNICEF contribution to humanitarian operations strengthens the overall system-wide response to humanitarian crises.

55. The Executive Board supported the developmental approach taken by UNICEF in dealing with emergencies since sustainable development was essential in preventing emergencies. The Board further recommended a strong linkage between relief and development as well as the need to continue working in post-conflict reconstruction and recovery. It identified the continuum between relief and development as requiring a more comprehensive analysis and an appropriate transitional mechanism. The Executive Board endorsed a four-pronged approach including preventive actions, preparedness, emergency assistance and rehabilitation and recovery assistance.

C. Capacity to respond

Specific measures to strengthen local capacity and coping mechanisms

56. The 1992 multi-donor evaluation of UNICEF, as summarized in document E/ICEF/1993/CRP.7, recommended service delivery, capacity-building, community participation and empowerment as the key strategies for UNICEF programming. The Executive Board was apprised of the premium UNICEF places on strengthening local capacity through enabling the family to ensure the care, protection and security of the child; encouraging communities to assume responsibilities for emergency response and recovery activities; and helping to create national capacity for re-establishing services and overseeing rehabilitation. The Board cited the joint development of common principles and standards of cooperation for the care and family reunification of unaccompanied children by UNICEF, UNHCR, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Save the Children Fund as a good example for developing and strengthening local capacity-building in the context of complex emergencies arising from war and civil conflict. The Executive Board recommended the increased use of local consultants and organizations, not only to contribute to local capacity-building, but also to enhance cost-effectiveness and engender the development process. It further urged the use of existing political and administrative structures for capacity-building, taking into account the provision of training in necessary skills.

Operational and financial capacity to act in a timely and effective manner

57. In compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF works to ensure that children caught in armed conflict retain the basic rights of protection against violence, sexual abuse, abandonment and all forms of human rights violations. In coordination with United Nations partners and humanitarian agencies, UNICEF makes its unique facilities for rapid response available to relieve the suffering of children and those who provide them with care. As part of its management excellence programme, UNICEF is reviewing its finance, supply and communications systems to ensure flexibility and greater capacity for responding to emergencies.

Administrative and other procedures that provide flexibility and facilitate rapid response

58. UNICEF is undertaking a comprehensive review of emergency operating procedures, operational and financial rules, and donor reporting standards. These reviews will support streamlining and improving administrative, personnel and financial rules and procedures as well as reporting systems so as to allow for a more flexible field response in emergency situations.

Delegation of authority to the field level

59. UNICEF is already a highly-decentralized organization, with considerable authority delegated to the country representative. UNICEF is now reviewing its decision-making procedures related to the definition of and response to emergencies in order to clarify lines of authority, accountability and communication among country, regional and headquarters locations as part of the ongoing management excellence programme. Within the inter-agency review process, UNICEF will continue to support the principle of maximum delegation of authority and responsibility to the field level.

D. Resources: mobilization and allocation

60. UNICEF financial capacity during the relief and development phase was discussed at length by the Executive Board. The specific issues raised included: the risk of diverting funds from regular programmes to emergencies and related modalities; the ratio between funds spent on humanitarian and development activities; the funding of the basic package of additional services and greater resource mobilization for countries in need; the heavy burden placed on administrative resources due to increased emergency activities; the need to develop a working system for resource allocation and management at subregional levels as well as across borders; the use of the Emergency Programme Fund to enhance regional capacities; and the need to maintain the delicate balance between relief and development in the allocation of resources.

61. UNICEF also is developing a better recording system for resources received and expended to provide greater transparency and more clearly delineate between emergency and development expenditures. Related to this is the fact that UNICEF encounters a special problem with the continuing demand on it to strengthen its staffing capacity to respond more effectively to emergencies, while at the same time having to keep within mandatory resource limits.

E. Coordination

Working with the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs

62. UNICEF was commended for its demonstrated support for DHA and inter-agency coordination. Collaboration has included the secondment of staff to DHA at headquarters and field levels, support to the Disaster and Management Training

Programme (DMTP) and the Complex Emergency Training Initiative (CETI), and active participation in needs assessment missions and the formulation of consolidated appeals. UNICEF continues to advocate that the Consolidated Appeals Process System accord priority to activities that both save child lives and ensure early recovery.

63. While staff security and working communication systems in emergencies do not come under the purview of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, they are, nevertheless, vital elements of the United Nations system-wide response capacity. UNICEF is collaborating closely with United Nations partners to streamline and strengthen staff security in emergency countries through training, better contingency planning, and managing effective communication and logistics systems. In high-risk security situations, the United Nations Security Coordinator may deem it appropriate to instruct operational agencies to evacuate a country. However, these are often the very situations justifying the continuing presence of UNICEF to cater for the needs of affected populations. This apparent difference in perception of security roles should be addressed.

Working with other partners: the development of memoranda of understanding

64. Consolidation of partnership arrangements is an essential basis for effective collaborative action and a priority for UNICEF in strengthening its emergency response capacity. UNICEF is well advanced on the development of memoranda of understanding with UNHCR and WFP and has initiated discussions on the subject with WHO and UNESCO. In addition, UNICEF is developing stand-by agreements for collaborative action with centres of excellence and a new standard agreement prototype for cooperation with NGOs at the field level is being finalized. The Executive Board complimented these efforts and urged further strengthening of coordination with mutually supportive United Nations agencies, the donor community and ICRC as well as a formalizing of partnerships with NGOs.

F. Evaluation and training

65. As part of the overall UNICEF management excellence process, UNICEF is working in partnership with other United Nations agencies to improve and strengthen assessment procedures in order to provide a better basis for planning, monitoring and evaluation. The improved capacity of the Office of Emergency Programmes to coordinate communications between emergency field operations and the Emergency Operations Centre in New York also has made it possible to share communications and situation reports with DHA and the United Nations Department of Peace-keeping Operations.

66. Internally, through its comprehensive training programme, UNICEF has embarked on measures to enhance staff emergency capacity, both managerial and technical. UNICEF also is revising its staff rules in support of inter-agency initiatives to promote the codes of conduct in tandem with standards of professionalism. Increased efforts are under way to enhance knowledge and skills in-house. UNICEF has been cooperating closely with DMTP and in the development of CETI. UNICEF has invited other United Nations partners in emergency response, including UNHCR, WFP and DHA, to participate in emergency management workshops and provided trainers for the courses held by others. The Executive Board urged UNICEF to strengthen further the capacity of its staff and partners to be better prepared to respond in times of crisis.

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ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS: FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Review and analysis of agrarian reform and rural development

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Economic and Social Council, as an annex to the present note, the report on the review and analysis of agrarian reform and rural development. Pursuant to Council decision 1981/185, the secretariat of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has prepared the report in collaboration with other concerned organizations and bodies of the United Nations system.

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Annex

CONFERENCE

Twenty-eighth Session

Rome, 20 October - 2 November 1995

FOURTH PROGRESS REPORT ON WCARRD PROGRAMME OF ACTION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Fourth Progress Report on the WCARRD Programme of Action has been modified extensively in an attempt to overcome its weaknesses and improve its responsiveness. The length has been reduced in order to minimize duplication with other documents available at this Conference.

The Report is divided into five sections:

WCARRD 1990-95 - an overview
Access to land, natural resources, inputs, markets and services
People's participation
Women in agriculture and rural development
Education, training and extension

All sections have been prepared and revised in collaboration with the relevant units.

Five innovations have been introduced in WCARRD in order for it to be more responsive to the needs of Member Governments. It will also be able to provide information and guidance on the necessary steps needed to achieve WCARRD objectives.

Country questionnaires
WCARRD Directory
WCARRD Country Profiles
WCARRD Database
WCARRD Follow-up country studies

The last WCARRD follow-up and reporting period has witnessed a growing consensus among Member Nations on the need for political and economic liberalization. This process, which has the potential to facilitate WCARRD objectives, has been one of the defining characteristics of these last five years. Many Member Nations have realized that liberalization has proven to be a complex and highly problematic process which has not yielded the benefits for the world's rural poor which were anticipated. The experience of many Member Governments has demonstrated that economic and political reform will not succeed without the strengthening of rural institutions and voluntary social organizations which facilitate the active participation of the rural people in development. It must include specific measures to target the needs of the rural poor, "safety nets" should be established in order to prevent the marginalization or complete exclusion of the rural poor from the development process.

The recent phase of liberalization has raised attention to the tension between the short-term productive and economic and the long-term effects on the environment. Environmental issues are, in theory, taken into concern in most developmental objectives and strategies.

With the retreat of governments from the centre stage the trend to rely on the market and the private sector for economic efficiency and equitable distribution of resources, wealth and opportunity in a society has increased over the last five years. There still exist, today, constraints limiting the equal participation of disadvantage groups of the population in the market sector.

Women in recent years have received recognition globally for their contribution in the development process. Nevertheless in many regions policies preventing women from participating still persist. Where policies have favoured the advancement of women inadequate mechanisms have been established to assure that such policies achieve their full potential.

Many Member Nations have witnessed an increase in their enrolment rates in education and an increase in the population active in agriculture. Educational services, such as extension, are dealing with more issues of interest to populations. The need for investing in education is greater now than it has been in recent years; it is still an essential element for human development and the economic growth of a nation. Most Member Nations, due to reform measures, have undertaken cuts in their public expenditure. This has had a negative impact on the quality and availability of extension services and education.

INTRODUCTION
WCARRD: REPORTING AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Main points

There is a need for more focused and timely WCARRD Reporting.

- Better data collecting techniques are in place through the development of the new WCARRD questionnaires for Member Nations.
- Proposed closer and continuous working relations with Member Nations on WCARRD Monitoring and Evaluation.

The evolution of the WCARRD Monitoring and Evaluation procedure demonstrates a sustained commitment to the issues and objectives at the centre of the Peasants' Charter. The original Plan of Action embodies a call for flexibility and sensitivity. The current techniques being developed in support of the Fourth WCARRD Follow-up Report and related activities bear testament to the application of these principals. Effective Monitoring and Evaluation requires an ability to respond to changing contexts and environments. The above recent developments in the way FAO has sought to fulfil its WCARRD mandate represent a beginning, they do not constitute an end.

WCARRD reporting

1. WCARRD mandated FAO "and other organizations of the UN system" to "assist in sensitizing the populations of member countries...to the realities of rural poverty, and to the need for global commitments for [the] transfer of resources from the developed countries for the benefit of the rural poor in the developing countries." Furthermore, WCARRD required FAO to "develop indicators of agrarian reform and rural development and help collect and analyse pertinent data in order to monitor progress toward respective national targets of rural development..." and "to "develop improved criteria and methods for monitoring and evaluating rural development and assist governments...in introducing systematic monitoring and evaluating procedures." And, as a necessary corollary to such activities, WCARRD recognized FAO's obligation to "make timely reviews and evaluations of the environmental impact of rural development programmes, projects and technology..." Finally, it was stated that FAO would "undertake periodic reviews with each country in respect of its policies, programmes and resources devoted to the achievement of the objectives outlined in...[the] Programme of Action and of the support provided by these efforts by the relevant international organizations."

"[t]he World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development...hereby declares that...governments should consider action to...undertake to collect on a regular basis quantitative data...and establish benchmarks...and report changes pertaining to these indicators at every other biennial FAO Conference thereafter."[1]

2. Future Reporting and Monitoring and Evaluation procedures of WCARRD are to be built upon a combination of country reports on the state of progress towards WCARRD goals and objectives, secondary data collected from within and without the UN system and the results of specific FAO-organized case studies undertaken in selected countries and regions. This shift is the

[1] The Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (The Peasants' Charter), page 9.

result of certain decisions. Firstly, the WCARRD Monitoring and Evaluation procedure is expected to be undertaken in a world that is profoundly different from that of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Secondly, there have been deficiencies associated with previous reporting procedures. Thirdly, there has been a persistently low rate of report submission by countries. Fourthly, the information that was submitted was invariably in a form that made analysis and comparison very difficult. Some countries for example, submitted ten page reports, whilst a few others provided two hundred page documents representing detailed accounts of the progress of agrarian reform within their countries. And still others simply sent a copy of their most recent agriculture census (already available in FAO). As a result, it has not been possible to develop a comprehensive database linked to WCARRD reporting. These then, are the problems that this and subsequent WCARRD Monitoring and Evaluation reporting procedures intend to resolve.

Recent changes to the reporting procedure

3. Attempts were made to identify the causes of the weaknesses that had characterized certain components of previous efforts, and alternative strategies were proposed. As a result, the reporting procedure for the Fourth WCARRD Progress Report has been modified extensively. Five innovations have been introduced:

Country questionnaires
WCARRD Directory
WCARRD Country Profiles
WCARRD Database
WCARRD follow-up country studies

Country questionnaires

4. In spite of the increasing tendency towards "questionnaire overload" it has been concluded that a questionnaire is still more likely to be completed and returned than an open-ended request for reports based on a series of generally-defined indicators.

5. The questionnaire has been divided into five discrete sections:

Access to Land, Water and Other Natural Resources
People's Participation
Education, Training and Extension
Integration of Women in Rural Development
Poverty Alleviation and Equity

Each section has been developed in collaboration with the relevant Services and Divisions in FAO. During the development stage the Country Questionnaires were distributed outside FAO for extensive pre-testing.

6. Considerable attention was paid to developing a clear and accessible format and to providing as much supporting information as possible (i.e. possible data sources/detailed information relating to completing each individual section etc.). The questionnaire focused on three different "types" of information:

quantitative information on trends and patterns
qualitative information on policies and programmes
interpretative information on causes and effects.

The questionnaire was sent to all Member Nations and each section was distributed to the most appropriate institution/individual within the public sector of each country. These targeting procedures elicited both qualitative and quantitative improvements in response levels.

The WCARRD Directory

7. In addition to the quadrennial publication of the WCARRD Follow-up Report, a WCARRD Directory is being developed. It contains key WCARRD-related information on each Member Nation, with an emphasis on accessibility and graphic content. This will fulfil two functions. In the short-term it provides an immediate response to the current absence of an end-user friendly WCARRD database. In the long term, it will provide a valuable stand-alone information tool for the expanded WCARRD information resource inventory. The Directory will combine qualitative and quantitative information on trends and policies and a valuable country/regional/international source of comparative information.

WCARRD Country Profiles

8. In conjunction to the WCARRD Directory, it is proposed that a series of Country Profiles will be developed. This will provide more detailed and more diverse information than the Directory, and will be inherently flexible and upgradable. This will permit the production of detailed reports tailored to the requests of individual users.

WCARRD Database

9. The last 18 months have witnessed the development of a WCARRD Database. It combines data and indicators collected from UN agencies and the WCARRD country questionnaires. The database will be updated and extended constantly, and will incorporate both comparative and country specific information. In addition, it will contain extensive qualitative data, including information on policy and legal reform.

10. The database has been progressing with the return by Member Nations of completed WCARRD country questionnaires. The WCARRD database will eventually be included in WAICENT.[2] The WCARRD database will act as the only centralized information resource on issues relating to rural poverty and development. During the database development phase, two priorities were identified: 1) distributive potential and end-user facility and 2) strong search capacities. There was, it was clear, little use to be derived from a database of this type unless it could be used, with ease, by a wide range of potential users. As a result, emphasis has been placed on "usability" and exploring the different media available for its distribution. It is planned that the database will have been distributed to Member Nations and UN agencies by late-1996 using a suite of media, including electronic transmission and distribution by diskette. It was deemed necessary to develop a database with the capacity to perform complex extraction procedures based on multi-level search criteria. This, it was felt, would assist governments and UN agencies alike, in identifying worthwhile international comparisons and the range of reforms and programmes required in order to enact similar processes locally.

WCARRD follow-up country studies

11. The country questionnaires and the data collected from secondary sources will contain largely national level data and will be inevitably superficial in relation to the analysis of certain issues. As a result, in-depth country studies will be organized at the request of Member Nations following the completion of the Questionnaire. This will provide detailed information on trends and processes, and will supplement the policy/programme-related information that has been collected elsewhere.

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[2] World Agricultural Information Centre.

The WCARRD Monitoring and Evaluation procedure has been transformed. It is now more responsive to the needs of Member Governments and is able to provide information and guidance on the steps required to move towards WCARRD goals.

For as long as WCARRD goals remain unmet, there is a need for UN agencies such as FAO to strive for innovation and new methods for providing assistance and support to Member Nations. The ongoing innovations in the WCARRD reporting procedure testify to FAO's commitment to its WCARRD Mandate.

TABLE 1

Problem	Problem-solving activities	Action taken
1. Failure of WCARRD to keep up-to-date on relevant issues facing Member Nations	• Redirect WCARRD-related activities • Examine causes of failure	• Reorganization of report-writing • Reorganization of information collection procedures • Reorganization of information presentation
2. Divergence between WCARRD goals and data collected	• Reappraise WCARRD goals • Establish practical means to support these goals	• Development of new WCARRD reporting procedure • Developement of new WCARRD-related activities
3. Low levels of government response to requests for information	• Identify data sources • Examine availability of data	• Increase level of secondary data • Development of detailed questionnaires • Identify sources of data requested
4. Low quality of data	• Identify data sources • Examine availability of data	• Collection of secondary data • Detailed quesionnaires • Identify probable data sources in questionnaires
5. High levels of data duplication	• Review current availability of data in UN system	• Visit institutions • Import relevant data
6. Lack of comparative data	• Identify suitable comparative data • Identify source of data	• Develop country questionnaires • Import secondary data • Develop comparative database
7. Lack of database	• Identify needs and requirements of database • Identify appropriate software and hardware configurations	• Establish database • Develop information presentation formats
8. Low levels of reporting and information development between WCARRD Reports	• Establish on-going WCARRD information distribution capacity	• Development of WCARRD database • Production of country fact sheets

SECTION 1
WCARRD 1990-95 - an overview

Main points

Economic and political liberalization have become the dominant themes in rural development theory and practice.

- Rural poverty has decreased in some regions.
- Patterns of government expenditure reflect continuing distortions.
- Economic restructuring has proved problematic.

The last WCARRD follow-up and reporting period witnessed growing consensus among Member Nations on the need for political and economic liberalization. Governments retreated from centre stage and promoted the market as the main arbiter of economic efficiency and the equitable distribution of resources, wealth and opportunity within society. In theory these reforms are essential for the realization of WCARRD goals.

Realizing reform is neither easy nor complete. The experience of many Member Nations demonstrates that economic and political reforms must include specific measures to target the needs of the rural poor. Without "safety nets", liberalization can lead to either the marginalization or complete exclusion of the rural poor from the benefits of political and economic reform. Furthermore, the experience of the 1990s has heightened the need to augment current understanding of the relationships between civil society and the private sector (in addition to that between civil society and the state).

Recent events demonstrate that the rural poor continue to be denied many of the benefits of change. The causes of exclusion are complex. Continuing global recession, imperfect terms of trade, spatial distortions at the sub-national level and incomplete government commitment or inappropriate international advice, all lead to the continued exclusion and marginalization of the rural poor.

Economic and political liberalization and WCARRD goals

12. An increasing number of Member Nations have accepted that a properly constructed market, rid of distortions and privileges, is the most effective means of distributing rights and wealth within a society. Likewise, Member Nations have recognized that political freedom and participatory democracy represents the only way of incorporating the needs of individuals and groups within the decision-making process. Nonetheless, both economic and political liberalization require profound commitment and deep systemic reform in order to become a meaningful reality.

13. Liberalization has the potential to facilitate WCARRD goals. It can assist the distribution of land, the improvement of educational services, the direct participation of the rural poor in policy formulation and the reduction of gender disparities. It represents therefore, a basic instrument for poverty alleviation and eventual eradication.

Economic and political liberalization: the problems

14. Few countries are forced to operate alone. Instead the period has witnessed increasing levels of international cooperation and support. The IMF and World Bank for example, have continued to develop structural adjustment-type packages that facilitate: a) reduced government intervention; b) financial restructuring; c) fiscal reform; d) targeted infrastructure investment; e) stimulation of the private sector.

These adjustment programmes aim at the restoration of internal and external balances between aggregate demand and available resources through the tightening of domestic financial policies. They also often include currency depreciation to equilibrate the market for foreign exchange. These are essential steps for stabilizing an economy, the resumption of sustainable growth and poverty reduction, and for altering prices as a basis for the movement of resources from the production of non-tradables to tradables.[3]

15. These economic reforms have had impacts on all sectors. Studies suggest, however, that many of the structural adjustment and related economic liberalization initiatives have had a negative impact on the rural poor. Effects depend on production-side factors such as whether the poor are net producers of tradable or non-tradable commodities. Economic and political liberalization often lead to reductions in rural wage and employment levels, increases in product prices, increasing factor costs of production and reduced compensatory public sector welfare expenditure. In the short term however, these changes have led to negative effects on the poor. Despite the intended aim of increasing infrastructure investment, new fiscal constraints force many governments to reduce or abandon such plans altogether. As a result, poor rural producers tend to pay higher production costs and higher consumption costs; at the same time, many governments have opted to reduce supportive land, production and housing initiatives. These trends have been experienced throughout Africa, Asia, Eastern and Central Europe, the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and Latin America.[4]

16. As a response to these short-term problems, the reporting period saw the emergence of a new advocacy for social safety nets to protect the poor from the immediate negative effects of economic and political reform. It recognizes that attention should be directed at the formulation of secondary policy and programme initiatives to enable the (rural) poor to participate actively in the new economic environments and marketplaces. These initiatives range from specific targeted interventions, such as direct support to small farmer production systems (improving marketing channels, improving access to appropriate technology, etc). to policy decisions reflecting the need to ensure human capital development (education and extension, nutrition and health and so forth).

17. An unequivocal solution to the problems of liberalization has not been found during the period under review. The relationship between economic reform, food production, and rural poverty remains shrouded in seemingly contradictory evidence. Efficiency gains in the output of export crops which are needed to meet adjustment goals have led to the inability of some countries through domestic production to be able to satisfy their food needs. Likewise relative and absolute rural poverty levels have risen in many regions. Indeed, recent FAO estimates suggest that even though the total number of people experiencing daily food insecurity will fall from the current global level of 800 million to approximately 650 million by the year 2010, this decline conceals regional

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[3] World Bank, 1993:4 (in Poverty Reduction Handbook. IBRD: Washington:4).

[4] Further elaborated in the Eighth IAA Report prepared for the Conference (C 95/18).

variations. Much of the decline will reflect increasing food security in the Middle and Far East and Latin America. Unfortunately, predictions are that by 2010 almost 30 percent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa will experience daily hunger. Rural poverty continues to represent the denial of a basic human right and it restricts the capacity of an economy to grow.

> Economic and political liberalization are not ends in themselves. Instead, liberalization is a platform for change. It has the potential to act as a vehicle for poverty alleviation and eventual eradication.

18. Evidence shows that the design of national reform measures must be sensitive to context-specific conditions, constraints and areas of potential growth. Recent experiences in Latin America for example, have demonstrated the rapidity with which foreign capital periodically flees a region and its often uncertain commitment to emerging capital markets. Countries should not rely solely on long-term foreign capital investment to support and finance domestic economic growth. Instead, Member Nations must prioritize the strengthening of local economic capacities and for many countries the principal economic sector is ***agriculture***. Even though urbanization is the predominant settlement trend, it is dynamically tied to rural and agricultural sectors. The majority of the world's poor are rural, and the majority of urban residents live in small rather than large cities.[5] These smaller urban centres tend to have stronger functional and economic links with surrounding rural areas. Likewise, geographically uneven programme implementation can lead to disincentives for rural producers, resulting in migration and/or declining production levels. Far too many countries have eliminated subsidies for rural producers but not those favouring urban consumers. This has led to unequal terms of trade between producers and consumers, and can lead to an increase in rural poverty, lower production and/or unsustainable cultivation practices.

19. Simple but well-targeted initiatives can generate substantial improvements. The elimination of price controls can lead to dramatic increases in production and reduced rural poverty. The Government of Guyana, for example, freed rice prices, resulting in increases of over 300 percent in farm gate prices. This led to an immediate rise in the area under rice cultivation by small farmers. Previously, many small farmers rented out land to medium and large farmers who were able to derive scale economies resulting from artificially lo land rents. Price changes brought small farmers back to the land, increased their incomes and provided incentives for important investments in land and water management systems. Furthermore, with the assistance of international donors and development agencies, the Government of Guyana has initiated a process of profound tenure reform and is attempting to restructure drainage and irrigation management systems. This commitment reflects an awareness of the need to marry macro-economic reforms with necessary agricultural changes and reforms.

> Liberalization is neither straightforward nor easy. It requires profound reform and multi-sectoral interventions. Governments must be aware of the need to provide appropriate support and incentives to the agricultural sector. Without this support the rural population will be unable to reap the benefits of economic and political liberalization, and the deficiencies in the agricultural sector may stifle growth in other sectors.

Liberalization and the environment: examining the relationship

20. The recent phase of liberalization has drawn attention to the tension between short-term productive and economic gains and long-term natural resource management and preservation. Rapid productive gains are often sought through technological development and innovation. All agricultural

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[5] United Nations World Urbanization Prospects: the 1994 Revision. The recent UN monitoring report (E/CN.9/1995/2) notes that only 6 percent of the urban population lives in mega cities of 8 million or more whereas more than half of the world urban population lives in small cities of less than 500 000 inhabitants (projections show that the proportion will be maintained to 2015).

technologies, however, impact on the resource base. Although the Green Revolution in the 1970s showed that high input systems are capable of substantially higher yields recent experience in South Asia demonstrates that long-term use of these technologies and reliance on high input farming methods can also lead to degradation of the natural resource base. In these areas and where natural resources are already severely degraded, the economic costs of the impacts has proved unacceptably high.

21. In theory, competition favours those producers with comparative advantages and penalizes non-competitive sectors. In the case of agriculture however, the rural poor and small farmers are often unable to "switch" to competitive sectors due to insecure tenure, low levels of investment and other reasons. They are often compelled to continue agricultural practices that are both uncompetitive and environmentally damaging but at the same time allow them to survive. Many policy initiatives fail to recognize the productive and economic potential of these disadvantaged groups, thus continuing the cycle of poverty and land degradation. Greater investment in human capital and information-based technologies such as integrated pest management (IPM) and integrated plant nutrition (IPN) are among the strategies most likely to sustain the natural resource base and benefit the rural poor.

Defence expenditure, conflict and rural poverty

22. High levels of military expenditure and continuing conflicts continue to produce negative impacts on agriculture and the rural poor. The resurgence of ethnic wars and even genocide in parts of Europe and Africa provide a brutal reminder of the effect of conflict.

23. These conflicts are the ones that capture the attention of the international media and political community; others do not. UNDP has estimated that between 1989 and 1992 there were 82 conflicts (only three were international) and the number of civil wars is increasing rather than decreasing. International NGOs continue to remind us that more people are killed and injured by domestic forces than by foreign military intervention. It is important to note that 90 percent of war casualties today are civilians (in contrast to the 90 percent casualties who were military at the beginning of the Twentieth Century - ***Twentieth Century war has become civilianized rather than civilized***). Furthermore, a majority of civilian casualties are rural. Sustaining large military forces is often at the expense of reduced social and agricultural investments, and the supply of food and other vital commodities to domestic markets.

Reform in Eastern and Central Europe and the former-Soviet Union

24. The regions that have provided the clearest indication of the costs and benefits of economic and political reform during the last WCARRD follow-up and reporting period are Eastern and Central Europe and the former-Soviet Union (FSU). In almost all of the FSU, political freedom and economic liberalization have led to substantial declines in output, the reduction of agricultural services and increased rural poverty. The profound changes have prompted reconsideration of conventional notions of rural development. Nonetheless, it appears that many of the costs are short term. Furthermore, the difficult process of political and economic reform throughout the region has generated a new spirit of international cooperation and donor assistance.

SECTION 2
ACCESS TO LAND, NATURAL RESOURCES, INPUTS, MARKETS AND SERVICES

Main points

Member Nations are increasingly relying on the market to determine access to land, natural resources, inputs and services.

- Economic liberalization and accompanying market reforms continue.
- Renewed interest in institutional regularization of land and other transactions.
- Land market reforms are progressing slower than other input/output factor reforms.
- Growth with equity is a goal still unmet.

The trend to rely on the market place and the private sector to gain access to all input and output markets, including land, natural resources, credit and services, has continued during the present reporting period. The transition to market-based institutions through structural adjustment has proved, however, to be much more difficult than originally thought. This has been due to both structural and institutional problems. At the same time, there has been an increasing understanding of the evolving relationship between markets and agrarian systems.

Growing reliance on market distribution

25. The overwhelming trend among Member Nations is that input and output markets are becoming more competitive. This has been the result of a continuation of economic liberalization programmes and general trade agreements such as GATT. These programmes have resulted in extensive dismantling of parastatals, removal of subsidies and elimination of other market distortions.[6] Economic growth has accelerated in many parts of the world as a result of freer trade, privatization of inefficient state enterprises and the move from central planning to market economies. The global picture is that with increased access to input and output markets the per capital income of hundreds of millions of low-income people is rising faster than previously.

26. While the general picture is positive, the benefits of economic liberalization and market reforms have not spread evenly. Small and marginal producers are often more vulnerable to the changes in patterns of subsidy. Prior to economic liberalization programmes governments often directly and indirectly subsidized inputs and production. Although subsidies were frequently captured by the large farm sector, small producers and poor farmers also derived limited benefits. Subsidies enabled the artificial sustainment of non-profitable and/or unsustainable small as well as large farms. Those who were near or below the poverty line before economic transformation are increasingly unable to attain minimum reproductive thresholds in the initial post-reform period. These problems are aptly demonstrated in the experiences of many farmers in Eastern and Central Europe: inputs, services and machinery now reflect world prices, yet they are unable to sell their products at equivalent prices in weak local markets.

27. This is not to say that economic reform is misguided. The economic foundation of agrarian systems based on price subsidies and market distortions was not sustainable. Without major structural change and transformation, the deteriorating condition of most rural residents was irreversible. Rather, it is now realized that a competitive input and output market and a viable

[6] See the Eighth IAA Report prepared for the Conference (C 95/18) for more details.

financial system are necessary for sustainable agricultural growth. Evidence shows however, that reform must not refer simply to a shift from state to market. The successful transmission of the full benefits of economic and political reform to all sectors of rural society requires an integrated strategy of multi-sectoral adjustments and compensatory actions. Changes need to be effective in credit and land markets, supporting land information systems and legislation, and in overall agriculture sector policies and perspectives.

Policy perspectives: small farm advocacy

28. In many Member Nations, the shift towards the market has been accompanied by a parallel shift in favour of small farms and family farming. This reverses a long established search for increased economies of scale through larger and larger farming operations. Since the last WCARRD Progress Report, studies have found that there are few, if any, economies of scale in agriculture that extend beyond family farming. Farming can only be "industrialized" in exceptional circumstances (e.g. plantation crops), and even then it may not be environmentally sustainable.[7] In family farming there are clear economies of scale resulting from lower supervision costs and increased density of family labour inputs. Rationalizing farm operations with available technology in family farming has led to a resurgent interest in land consolidation. Member Nations such as France, the Netherlands, and Turkey report the development of market-based systems to assist farmers in consolidating their farming operations as a principle means of ensuring their survivability and economic growth. This process has been made more economically feasible through recent developments in LIS [land information systems] technology which will be discussed more fully below. Elsewhere, there has been a growing awareness of the need to stimulate and support the small farm sector. Liberalization and an emerging consensus that the most effective land delivery system is the market, has meant that governments have looked increasingly to the market as a means of extending the small farm sector.

Land: the shift to the market

29. The majority of governments have recognized that the market (whether "free" or mediated) is the most effective land distribution mechanism. It is seen as a vehicle for the reduction of unequal patterns of distribution and as a means of reducing fragmentation and inefficient land use. When profound inequities in land ownership exist, for example, Member Nations such as South Africa have adopted market-led solutions as the only way to achieve an equitable participation and distribution in land resources without disruption and collapse of the agricultural sector on the one hand, and social and political collapse on the other. Once again however, experience shows that corresponding participatory and democratic policy interventions and reforms are necessary.

30. Similarly, Member Nations, such as Philippines, who have advanced further in the land reform process than many other countries undergoing similar reforms, have discovered that productive and economic sustainability do not depend solely on access to land. Evidence has shown that relying on full compensation to large land holders and mortgages for land recipients to pay the cost is insufficient, and prone to accentuate distortions and inequalities. Further ancillary reforms are required: economic, social and environmental sustainability require that the new land holders have the capacity to participate fully in all other factor markets. They cannot do this where mortgage payments make other investments impossible. Therefore, land recipients require instruments to support land purchases. In addition, mechanism such as a graduated land tax, will have to be found to create willing sellers among the large land holders.

[7] For example see WB Working Paper 1164.

Constraints to land market development

31. Evidence shows that additional obstacles inhibit further the attempts of many Member Nations to introduce efficient land markets. Three types of constraints are apparent; they can be summarized as: geo-political, socio-cultural and socio-economic.

32. Ethno-regional tensions, geo-political disputes and customary attachments to specific locations may block attempts to implement profound structural and land market reforms. A fully functioning market requires geographical evenness: such constraints act as concrete obstacles to the free-flowing development of markets within national and international territories. It becomes clear then, that the recent wave of ethno-regional conflict and ethnic genocide in both Europe and parts of Africa impose insurmountable barriers to any processes of economic reform. Furthermore, any subsequent land-based reforms can not be implemented until all geographically-based disputes have been resolved fully, thereby ensuring that no barriers restrict the free-flow of ownership and title within national space.

33. Socio-cultural traditions and values can impose similar constraints on the emergence of land markets within a country. Traditional attachments, for example, to historic land tenure arrangements and land distribution mechanisms can conflict with attempts to introduce market-based land tenure systems. The experiences of selected countries in sub-Saharan Africa demonstrate this tension. A clear incompatibility exists between traditional common property resource management systems and conventional land markets. In theory, there are two extreme options available to governments: the complete dismantling of traditional tenure systems and their substitution with market-regulated systems of access and transfer, or the complete preservation of traditional systems in selected areas. Complete substitution ignores the geographical sensitivity and contextual merit of local traditional systems, can lead to the increased marginality of vulnerable groups and can result therefore, in systemic entropy. Likewise, the complete preservation of traditional systems in geographically delimited areas and their protection from potentially transformative external forces does not reflect the reality of these systems. Traditional systems are rarely static and fixed. Instead they are often highly dynamic and flexible systems, apt at responding to changing needs and conditions. Policies that seek to protect them legally against the encroachment of alternative tenure systems can inadvertently suppress their dynamic potential, through imposing a set of rigid rules and conditions. Therefore, policies and tenure reforms have tended to, and should focus at a given point along a continuum that stretches between these two possibilities. The appropriateness of the specific approach selected depends on local conditions, relating to the strength and importance of traditional systems as compared to the potential returns offered by new tenure arrangements and transfer mechanisms. In many cases, a mediated solution has proved most effective, through which the demands and sensitivities of traditional groups and their tenure arrangements are incorporated into a process of reform. A common problem refers to the validity of traditional or customary registration procedures in comparison to formal written registration documents associated with contemporary land cadastre systems. These common disparities complicate arbitration and dispute resolution procedures. Niger for example, has established a progressive framework approach whereby traditional and "modern" registration procedures are given equal legal weighting and validity. Elsewhere, such as in Burkina Faso, governments have sought to empower local institutions in order to ensure that local/traditional land tenure arrangements and land rights are respected and incorporated within the land delivery system and process. This type of arrangement, whereby traditional and non-traditional tenure arrangements and registration procedures are granted equal validity appears the most valid and sustainable solution, for it ensures the non-disruption of traditional systems and the non-violation of traditional rights.

Fiji and India

Fiji, for example, is using modern LIS technologies to ensure that land transactions in the customary land areas that make up the majority of the island are just as viable as those in the private property sector. In this way Fijian holders of customary rights can benefit from modern sustainable investments without endangering their traditional land tenure values.

West Bengal State in India presents another innovative way of applying modern concepts of land tenure cadastre to traditional problems. Here, simple registries have been created to handle, at the Panchayat (village council) level, all the various recognized land access arrangements. This has given increased security to holders of secondary tenures associated with share-cropping and other tenancy arrangements. The field data record increased investment in sustainable practices when both the tenant and the landlord feel that there is protection that the other party cannot arbitrarily change the arrangement without due process.

34. Land markets are frequently distorted by underlying socio-economic conditions. Incomplete market reforms can lead, for example, to the accentuation of existing socio-economic disparities and patterns of unequal ownership. This is seen in the trend towards market segmentation that often occurs when the poor and landless have access to only a limited supply market of small, usually fragmented parcels. In these cases, it is invariably only economically larger and financially more secure interests that are able to participate in the market for larger and better endowed properties. In these cases then, attempts to introduce land markets have led to the emergence of multiple and polarized land markets, with few inter-market transactions. This often leads to inefficiently sized units, idle land and speculation. This is not only a condition that affects economies in transition. Many Member Nations in Latin America are seeking institutional reforms that will eliminate market segmentation.[8]

Macro economic and structural reform have to proceed far enough to ensure that viable input, output and financial markets are functioning. With the above caveats in mind, the development of rural resource markets hold the greatest potential for assisting the rural poor, landless and disenfranchized populations in achieving economic sustainability.

The conclusion to be drawn from careful analysis of sociological as well as economic analysis of land markets is that carefully balanced policy intervention is needed to make them work fairly and effectively. Fortunately the kinds of policy intervention compatible with both political and economic liberalization of the market are rapidly developing. Member Nations have a rising battery of taxation, zoning, local-level and participatory planning policy tools available to use the land market as an effective mechanism to increase access by the poor and the landless. At the same time, these policy tools allow Member Nation governments to pursue policy goals of sustainable economic goals.

Credit markets

35. The requirements surrounding access to credit following economic liberalization frequently exacerbate the plight of the rural poor. The establishment of formal market mechanisms within a rural economy often removes, or reduces, the level of "traditional" credit mechanisms and imposes formalised banking conditions on the credit procedure. As a result, small and poor farmers, especially female headed households, are not in a position to compete for available credit. Several Member Nations report that alternative methods for the provision of inputs for such farmers exist, for instance small farmers joining together into modern service cooperatives.[9]

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[8] Mesa Redonda Sobre Politicas de Tierras en America Latina, Campinas, Brazil, 12-15 June 1995.

[9] See Section 3 of this report for further details of this process.

36. The last five years have witnessed selected Member Nations, in collaboration with international agencies and donors, directing increasing attention at the design and implementation of minimalist credit programmes. These, it is suggested, offer improved credit opportunities for small farmers, necessitated by the changed economic environment resulting from structural reform and economic liberalization. Although there is no consensus regarding the form and content of minimalist credit programmes, certain common features are emerging. Credit should be provided in the form of small, primarily working capital, loans. Secondly, in order to ensure recoverability of the loan amount (and thus, the sustainability of the credit system), interest rates should be above inflation. Thirdly, loans should be restricted in size, and repeat loans to individuals should be determined by prior repayments. Furthermore, lending should be character-based, rather than based on detailed feasibility studies. Collateral remains a problem for small farmers, particularly those lacking formal land title and registration documents. In these instances, it has been recommended that lending institutions should accept group guarantees as a substitute for individual ones, although this can lead to collective disadvantages resulting from individual market failures. Finally, it is being increasingly recognized that minimalist loan programmes should incorporate parallel technical and management-assistance programmes. These loan packages have been increasing throughout Latin America and South Asia, and have been used to support both farm and off-farm production units. It is clear however, that expansion of both conventional and alternative credit delivery systems is necessary in order to give rural producers an increased market presence in competing for inputs and credit. In addition, some NGOs assist the disadvantage with alternative sources of credit.

The need for a supportive institutional framework

37. Member Nations report that a lack of supporting institutions hampers the development of market efficiencies in achieving a more sustainable and equitable distribution of rural resources. Conveyancing institutions such as the land registry, cadastre, mortgaging, contract registration and so forth are often lacking, or do not respond to local needs. The market cannot hope to function as an effective and efficient distributor of land if there is no way to clearly determine who has the rights to use how much of it, and for which purposes; because land resources are permanent assets, they must also be defined in space. That is, we have to know what is where and where is what. Fortunately, during the reporting period, there has been a rapid learning curve in the area of land regularization. Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia, for example, have demonstrated that improving land records through land registration and cadastre systems lead to greatly improved participation by small farmers in transaction markets and to increased capital investment in sustainable agricultural practices. These countries have also found that where land records are either non-existent or unsatisfactory the resulting insecurity often leads to environmentally damaging farming systems.

38. Indeed, the pressure by Member Nations to have land record systems that are compatible with economic liberalization associated with the market has lead to an on-going reform of cadastre and land registration systems. This reform has been taking place in two policy arenas simultaneously: 1) the design of land cadastre/registration systems that serve the kinds of transactions in which land-holders engage; and 2) the use of capital saving technologies that are becoming increasing cost effective by the day, such as LIS (Land Information Systems), GPS (Geographical Positioning Systems) and computer data storage and retrieval. This reform has resulted in land cadastre/registration systems that have the flexibility to record a continuum of land tenure arrangements from private and individual land rights through to communal land rights, as well as having the ability to accommodate traditional or customary land rights.

39. Brazil and other Latin American countries have been recording greatly improved sustainable land-use practices in those areas where they have used modern LIS concepts and tools to define and protect indigenous rights. The lessons learned in recent years in the design of land regularization institutions such as the cadastre/registries, land law, mortgaging and conveyancing have given Member Nations enhanced capabilities to include indigenous communities in market transactions, while preserving cultural diversity.

40. The ability to provide secure and clear marketable transaction rights in land resources that form a continuum from customary to private right holders is associated with another area of rapid learning during the period under review. This is an understanding of the land tenure arrangements associated with common property resource management (CPRM) and with pooled and shared resources. Conventional wisdom had argued that only through private allocation of rights would people make rational investments in land. The recent research into the management of impacted forests, grassland and fishing grounds has demonstrated that it is not only possible to get more sustainable results from CPRM approaches, but also better economic returns. These findings dove-tail nicely with equally recent advances in LIS discussed above, that make CPRM compatible with economic liberalization.

Constraints to market participation

41. Markets tend to be judged on the basis of their efficiency rather than on equity. Today, there are still basic constraints to the equal participation of poor and disadvantaged populations in markets. The lack of readily available transport in rural areas is still a major problem. Travelling extensive distances also reduces the quality of the goods to be sold at the market. Markets, in many countries, tend to have rules and regulations which have been established by either government or powerful interest groups which inhibit broad participation. Many people, traditionally excluded from national institutions lack education, assets, skills and most of all credit; therefore, they are in no position to compete fairly in an emerging market which determines the distribution of goods and services.

42. There are preconditions which need to be addressed to create a more equitable market environment. These include all of the WCARRD Plan of Action concerns: investment in people, equitable access to assets such as land and credit, adequate infrastructure - including settlements and housing, access to information; removal of barriers preventing the participation of disadvantaged groups, legal enforcement, incentives, protection of consumers and workers.

SECTION 3
PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

Main points

Decentralization efforts will not succeed without strengthening rural institutions and voluntary social organizations which facilitate the active participation of rural people in the development and policy-making process.

- Current reforms create new opportunities and new obstacles for people's participation.
- A declining role of the central state implies a need for increasing people's capacities within the private sector and civic society to actively participate in the decision-making process.
- Developing sustainable capacities for participation requires organizational and institutional solutions, including the establishment of self-reliant and independent people's organizations.

Achieving sustainable rural development and environmental protection requires the cooperation of large, sometimes diverse populations, residing within specific ecological areas. Such cooperation can be enhanced through the voluntary action, cooperation and participation of all sectors of the rural population, including women and other vulnerable groups.

Voluntary rural people's organizations, such as community associations, cooperatives, farmers' organizations and informal groups as well as their inter-linked networks, are essential mechanisms for facilitating this cooperation. While these institutions and traditions have played a key role in enabling cooperation in most developed countries, they are noticeably weak in other parts of the world.

Declining public budgets and foreign assistance are forcing governments to explore more cost-effective approaches to reaching rural producers, in particular small farmers, who comprise vast majority of rural people and are the major producers of food.

Full recognition of the inherent advantages of using more participatory self-help organization approaches in mobilizing rural communities for sustainable agriculture and rural development is an essential first step. Many key decision-makers still need to be informed about and convinced of the economic and political benefits that flow from enhanced people's participation in development programmes and projects.

The new participatory imperative

43. Increasing global economic competition, declining foreign aid and state subsidy flows have put new pressures on governments to reduce the level and improve the cost-efficiency of public services. Rural populations of many developing countries have been particularly hard pressed by these trends. This is because they tend to be politically and geographically more isolated and less socially organized than their urban counterparts and are rarely consulted in the formulation of agricultural and rural development policies.

44. Rural populations as a result of these trends have been less able to protect themselves against poorly-conceived agricultural pricing and marketing policies and the negative side-effects of structural adjustment programmes. These latter effects include a drastic cut in rural development and extension services, a rapid disintegration of rural institutions, organizations and physical infrastructures and a sharp decline in marketed food production which has led to increased frustrations in many countries.

45. While most governments continue to promote rural people's participation through traditional organs of local government and through other formal organizations, such as cooperatives, they

frequently do so in a "top-down" fashion. They often utilize the organization as an instrument for achieving certain government-identified objectives rather than providing an enabling environment that would allow it to function freely as a farmer-owned and controlled self-help organization designed to meet farmer-identified needs.

46. Rural people have participated in these government-supported and financed organizations, but the participation has been mostly "passive". They have been identified as receivers of services, provided and financed by the government, rather than "active" as direct contributors to or stake-holders in the cooperative concern. Member ownership stake in these organizations tends to be low as is management accountability and performance.

47. With the liberalization of markets and the rapid decline of government subsidies and support to these organizations many are now encountering difficulties in operating under the new freer market conditions. Those unable to transform themselves into voluntary, member-controlled and -financed people's organizations will undoubtedly fail. Those that do succeed will pave the way for the establishment of new more participatory and self-reliant rural people's organizations.

People's organizations: strengthening their internal capacities

48. Voluntary rural people's organizations are increasingly being seen as indispensable tools for coping with this transition process and for enabling all producers, especially smaller rural producers and workers to obtain better economies-of-scale and bargaining power in the market place and in policy-making arenas. They are also being seen by some as essential social mechanisms for achieving complex sustainable development objectives and ensuring social harmony.

49. Loosely defined, this category of rural organizations refers to the "organs of rural civic society," i.e. to a wide variety of voluntary, membership-based rural people's organizations and supporting networks, which are controlled and primarily financed by members themselves and pursue member-defined ends. The category includes: rural and farmer cooperatives, agricultural labour unions, farmers' and rural women's associations, voluntary community bodies, such as church bodies and social clubs as well as small informal groups.

50. Official statistics do not often reflect the importance of rural people's organizations since they generally refer only to legally-recognized and registered rural people's organizations, such as cooperatives, agricultural labour unions and some farmer producer organizations. Little quantitative data exists on a broad range of other numerous informal rural people's organizations, like community associations, clubs and informal groups, which many assert, play an equally significant role in enabling people's participation at local level.

51. Agricultural cooperatives are the most visible farmer organizations in rural areas. In developed countries and within some sectors of the economy, agricultural cooperatives hold significant market shares. For example, within the dairy sector, cooperatives control more than 70 percent of the market for dairy products in ten countries (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and USA). Other sectors, such as grain, poultry, fruits and vegetables, rural electricity and farm input supply are also heavily cooperatized and it is quite common for farmer members to belong to several cooperatives at once.

52. Agricultural cooperative membership in developing countries tends to be much less extensive and overlapping, except in some NICs[10] where cooperative membership was often mandatory. In most LDCs,[11] agricultural cooperative membership is concentrated in high-value, labour-intensive food or export crop sectors, such as diary, fruits/vegetables, grains, coffee, tea, and sugar.

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[10] Newly independent countries.
[11] Least-developed countries.

TABLE 2
Cooperative market shares in selected developing countries (as % of total marketed production, 1990)

	Wheat	Dairy	Rice	Soya	Sugar	Cotton	Coffee	Fruits/ Vegs
Brazil	84	69	-	46	-	-	21	-
China	-	-	-	-	-	65	-	65
Costa Rica	-	85	-	-	13	-	-	84
India	-	90*	-	-	55	-	-	-
Indonesia	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-
Kenya	-	54	-	-	6	84	84	-

\- Signifies data not available.
* Processed dairy products only.
Source: COPAC Statistics.

53. Rural workers' organizations (RWOs) are another important form of rural people's organization. This category includes a variety of dues-supported agricultural labour unions and peasant unions, etc. whose members are typically agricultural wage labourers engaged in the export crop sector on large plantations and whose organizations are established to assist them in bargaining for improved working and salary conditions. Yet it is important to note that RWOs frequently provide other important member services as well, including smallholder extension, education and health services. RWOs are generally affiliated at national and higher levels to international apex organizations in order to increase their collective bargaining power. Current RWO membership affiliated to the aforementioned apex organizations is estimated to be in excess of 375 million workers worldwide. Some national RWOs are impressively large and exert considerable influence at national level, such as the Confederation of Agricultural Workers of Brazil (CONTAG) whose membership is estimated at 9 million members.

54. The key constraints to strengthening the internal capacities of agricultural cooperatives in NICs and LDCs are threefold: a) the paternalistic role of the state in the management of agricultural cooperatives in formerly socialist countries still is hindering the transformation of existing cooperatives from state-supported rural enterprises into independent farmer-owned and financed cooperative businesses; b) the existing top-down attitudes towards cooperative management of many existing cooperative managers and government cooperative officials; and c) the weak member capital base and low sense of member ownership stake in agricultural cooperatives.

55. At the country level, considerable progress has been made in reducing the excessive role of government in agricultural cooperatives, particularly in the field of cooperative legal reform as mentioned earlier. Privatization and the deregulation of domestic agricultural markets in which cooperatives operate, has also tended to enforce this trend; nevertheless, as a recent 1994 study of cooperative restructuring in Africa by the International Cooperative Alliance revealed, many farmer cooperatives, long-accustomed to receiving government support and control, are finding it difficult to make that transition. The situation is even more serious in some Eastern European and ex-Socialist countries.

56. Progress in the reorientation and retraining of cooperative managers and government support staff has been slower, yet some improvement can now be seen in countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, India, Thailand and Viet Nam.

57. Many agricultural cooperatives in developing and formerly socialist countries are heavily dependent on the state as a supplier of low-cost capital for investment and growth. With the current decline in government subsidies and support these same cooperatives will need to mobilize more member capital to survive and grow. Yet long-accustomed to government support, many will find it difficult to change. To address this capital crisis of agricultural cooperatives in 1992, FAO launched a special research programme aimed at identifying successful strategies for raising capital from internal (member) sources and developing improved guidelines which could be used by cooperative movements and governments alike in promoting more financially-self-reliant and sustainable cooperative growth.

58. The main problems facing RWOs today are financial and related to the gradual decline of plantation-style agriculture and worsening in terms-of-trade and employment between the urban and rural sectors the consequent rapid decline in their dues-paying membership base. RWO leadership's difficulty in adapting to satisfying the service needs of its changing member clientele has often aggravated this crisis. These problems have forced many RWOs to merge with other non-farm labour unions to guarantee their economic survival and to actively cater to serving the needs of their growing independent small farmer memberships. In short, many RWOs are now undergoing an important transformation process and are becoming more like independent small farmer producer associations. RWOs have recently shown considerable initiative in countries like Bolivia, Brazil, Venezuela, Ghana, India and the Philippines in coping with this transition. Internationally, UN agencies like ILO and FAO, in particular, have provided valuable support in strengthening their technical capacities to service their changing membership base.

59. In addition to the above, there is a growing trend towards the introduction of participatory small informal group methods for building more sustainable rural people's organizations (initially outside of formal cooperative structures) especially designed to serve the needs of small farmers and marginal rural producers. Specific progress can be seen since 1990 in countries like Sri Lanka, Thailand and Zambia where government agricultural extension services are now actively encouraging these approaches as elements of their overall extension strategies.

Increasing awareness of the need for people's participation

60. The World Social Summit in Copenhagen in March, 1995 noted the growing awareness among agricultural policy-makers that the trend towards decentralization and "down-sizing" of government development services to the rural sector, will not succeed without a corresponding strengthening and build-up of the organizational and technical capacities of the organs of rural "civic society" to assume these new responsibilities.

61. At the international level, FAO has played a lead role in promoting greater public awareness of the benefits and importance of people's participation through its Plan of Action on People's Participation in Rural Development approved by the FAO Conference in November 1991. The World Bank's new Learning Group on Participation has also recently produced a draft "Source-book on Participation" aimed at introducing more participatory approaches into the design of World Bank-financed development projects. UNCED's Agenda 21 declaration also has emphasized the importance of ensuring the more active participation of all "Major Groups," including farmers, women and other rural producers, working through their organizations, in pursuing sustainable agricultural and rural development objectives

62. While progress in raising awareness on people's participation has been slow in most developing countries, notable progress has been achieved in countries such as Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Tanzania and Zambia where governments are currently experimenting with the

introduction of new participatory, small group and community-based approaches to the delivery of agricultural extension, plant protection and credit services to small farmers.[12]

Creating a more favourable policy and legal environment

63. Genuine rural people's participation flourishes only where policy and legal conditions enable it to do so. While most low and middle income governments voice strong public support for democratic principles of government and for public participation in decision-making, the policies and laws of many often do not reflect that position. In some countries, laws still severely limit the right of rural people to organize themselves to pursue their self-help interests or, in other cases, allow them to do so only "under the guidance" of government or party officials. Nonetheless, the trend towards increased economic and political liberalization, has led to increased public pressure to reform outdated policies and laws that limit these participation rights.

64. Declining budgets also now mean that many LDC countries are now actively advocating decentralization programmes aimed at devolving more fiscal and decision-making authority and responsibility to local levels of government, which in turn, provide greater opportunities for promoting participation at those levels. Bolivia, for example, has recently embarked on an ambitious programme to promote more effective participation of rural people at the municipal level and other Latin American countries like Chile, Ecuador, Mexico and Venezuela have embarked on similar schemes. India and Nepal have also recently initiated a programme to revitalize the "Panchayat" system of government to assist in decentralization efforts.

Data availability

Current statistics provided by the Committee on Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC), indicates that more than 1.4 billion persons, in 101 countries, are members of legally-recognized people's organizations, such as urban and rural cooperatives, workers organizations, agricultural producer associations, etc. worldwide and roughly 49 percent of these live in rural areas.

While most observers will point out that these statistics may overstate the total active number of "registered" cooperatives, rural workers and farmer organizations worldwide, they will at the same time stress that the number of members of new and "still unregistered" or informal peoples' organizations may be considerably larger.

The total number of registered agricultural cooperative organizations worldwide in 1994, according to the International Cooperative Alliance, was approximately 370 490 affiliated agricultural cooperative societies in 101 countries reaching almost 185 million farmer members, the vast majority of which were located in Asia. It is worth adding that these figures do not include the more than 55 100 credit unions (cooperative savings and credit societies) in 90 countries, of which more than 50 percent are located in rural areas.

65. The reform of cooperative laws is another area where considerable progress has been made in the past few years. For instance, new cooperative laws or government decrees have been put into effect in Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovakia. New cooperative legislation is now in-the-process of being discussed and debated in a broad range of countries including: Zambia, Guinea, Rumania, India and Viet Nam. Meanwhile, interest in cooperative legal reform is also beginning to grow in the Russian Republic and China where rural cooperatives play

[12] See, for example, the P4K and Integrated Pest Management Programmes in Indonesia, the Farmer-centred Agriculture Resource Management Programme in Asia and FAO People's Participation Programme in Asia and Africa.

important roles in the delivery of farmer services and marketing of agricultural products. China, with the world's most extensive cooperative system, recently (December, 1994) held its first international workshop to discuss the topic of rural cooperative legal reform.

Promotion of improved dialogue between governments, development NGOs and rural people's organizations

66. One of the most notable trends in recent years has been the explosive growth of donor-supported "development NGOs" in LDCs, which often promote the establishment of rural people's organizations at grassroots level, but are not considered as belonging to that category. United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UNGLS) records currently list over 1 400 development NGOs (mostly network NGOs) as being registered with UN agencies. Unfortunately, because of the rapid increase in the number of these organizations in recent years, no accurate figures exist on the total number of these NGOs worldwide, though some estimate the number to be now in excess of 500 000. It is currently estimated (1994) that more than 6 000 NGOs exist in Sri Lanka alone! Development NGOs are normally distinguished from rural people's organizations in that they are generally not grassroots clientele member-based and that they draw most of their funding support from outside, non-local sources.

67. Since many rural development NGOs face common problems in accessing donor funds, undertaking large projects and influencing governments, they are increasingly beginning to establish their own support network organizations at national, regional and international levels. While most NGO networks were traditionally based in developed countries, rural development NGOs are increasingly setting up their headquarters in developing countries.

68. With the continuing decline in budgets and donor funding, governments and NGOs are now discovering the mutual benefits of "partnering" and dialoguing on issues of common interest and concern. Rural people's organizations, such as cooperatives and RWOs, who have at different times received support from both government and NGOs, are also entering into the dialogue process. In short, the scope for increased dialogue between these three groups appears to be growing. Notable in this area of promoting increased dialogue between NGOs and government on policy and rural development issues have been ANGOC and PHILDHRRA (Philippine Partnership for Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas) in the Philippines.

69. Rural people's organizations, given their slightly different orientation than development NGOs, are also increasingly seeking closer dialogue with governments on rural development issues through their own national, regional and international apex bodies.

NGO Networks

Rural development NGO networks may be national in scope like MYRADA in India, BRAC in Bangladesh, or FONGS in Senegal, or regional in coverage, such as the Asia NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural development (ANGOC), whose formal members include 26 national and regional network NGO organizations and institutions operating in eight Asian countries, CLADES in Latin America and the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD).

Monitoring and evaluation of people's participation

70. Regrettably, some governments still regard the promotion of participatory approaches to rural development as being too costly, not sustainable and/or, in the worst case, even politically destabilizing. While it is true that the initial "sunk costs" of participatory self-help approaches may

be higher than for grant-assisted or heavily-subsidized credit schemes, recent studies have shown that properly-executed participation projects see these costs rapidly declining by the third to fourth year.

71. The sustainability of participatory approaches is a legitimate question. Since 1989, FAO has conducted a series of post-project impact studies of former People's Participation Programme (PPP) Projects in five countries in Africa and Asia to look specifically at this question. While the study results are based on a very small sample of countries, the findings did show in four of the five cases that between 30-60 percent of the self-supporting small group structures established under these projects continued to remain active providing valuable services to their members (at no cost to government) two or more years after termination of FAO support. The implications for reducing the cost of agricultural extension delivery to small farmers in developing countries is clear as the approach appears to have been reasonably successful in establishing a near "zero cost" receiving system for small farmers that can be tapped by government extension, credit, health and education agencies.

SECTION 4
WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Main points

- Limited progress demonstrates the positive effects of a gender-sensitive policy for rural development.
- Agriculture and rural poverty are becoming more "feminized" due to economic and political dislocations.
- Equity in access to, and control over, rural resources for women farmers is essential for sustainable agricultural development in most regions.

Worldwide, rural women play a major role in agriculture (including fisheries, forestry and livestock) and rural development and, in many countries, are the mainstay of agricultural sectors and food systems. Yet the most disadvantaged population in the world today is comprised of rural women in developing countries, who have been the last to benefit - or who are negatively affected - by prevailing economic growth and development processes. Gender bias and blindness persist: farmers are still generally perceived as "male" by policy-makers, development planners and agricultural service deliverers.

Rural women and food security

72. Poverty, food insecurity, and environmental degradation are recognized as critical development problems and have been given highest priority on the international development agenda, following the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN, 1992), and United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, 1992), and the preliminary Platform for Action for the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995). These issues have a disproportionate negative impact on rural women, due to their inferior socio-economic, legal and political status as well as their critical roles as producers and household managers. The causes and effects of these impacts are systemic, with far-reaching implications for agricultural and rural development as a whole and for all initiatives aimed at raising levels of nutrition, improving production and distribution of food and agricultural products, and enhancing the living conditions of rural populations.

73. Within this context, women's empowerment will be central to achieving initiatives aimed at raising levels of nutrition, improving production and distribution of food and agricultural products, and enhancing the living conditions of rural populations. They have less access to productive resources (e.g. labour, water, land, tree crops, sylvan species, technology, agricultural inputs, credit, markets, extension, training, and even their own labour) than do men. At the same time, women's access to social services (e.g. schooling, health care and information, family planning) has been eroding. And all these constraints are compounded by women's lack of economic, political, and legal power to improve their circumstances.

74. According to a large and growing body of research, direct responsibility for household food provision falls largely on women. Whether reference is made to sub-Saharan Africa or the Caribbean, where women produce 60-80 percent of basic foodstuffs, or to Asia, where they perform over 50 percent of the labour in rice cultivation, or to Southeast Asia and the Pacific or Latin America, where their home gardens represent some of the most complex agricultural systems known,

women have a major responsibility for, and knowledge of, food systems and agriculture. They often provide most of the labour for, and make decisions on, a wide range of post-harvest operations, including storage, handling and marketing, and predominate in off-farm food processing activities either in micro-enterprises or as wage workers in agro-industries.

75. Hunger and malnutrition affect more than 1.3 billion people in the developing world. Most fall into the following categories: children under five years of age, especially girls; women of childbearing age, especially those who are pregnant or breast-feeding; and low-income households, a large percentage of which are female-headed. The 1992 World Declaration on Nutrition proclaimed that "the right of women and adolescent girls to adequate nutrition is crucial." Yet, rural female household members often get less food than males both absolutely and in terms of nutritional requirements. Indeed, it is estimated that over 70 percent of those living in absolute poverty are women.

76. According to recent research findings, there is a direct link between women's access to income and management of household resources and the improvement of household level food security and nutritional well-being of family members. This linkage, along with the importance of increasing women's productivity and hence their contribution to food systems, must constitute a central consideration of policies and programmes aimed at enhancing food security and nutrition.

Labour and the feminization of agriculture

77. In rural areas in developing countries, women spend up to 16 hours a day producing, processing, marketing and preparing food, gathering fuel and water, and performing other household tasks in addition to caring for their children and extended families. However, most rural women are not directly remunerated for their work. A woman may work 60 hours or more a week between domestic, farm and off-farm tasks, and yet receive no wage or cash income of any kind. In fact, women in developing countries work up to one-third more hours than men for an estimated one-tenth the income. Therefore, rural women confront a specific dilemma: they are overemployed in terms of hours worked and underemployed in terms of income received.

78. The economic crisis of the 1980s, structural adjustment programmes, armed conflicts and drought, are believed to have affected women more severely than men, leading to what has been termed by the United Nations as the "feminization of poverty." In particular, male labour force migration, forced migration (i.e. environmental and civil conflict refugees) and the breakdown in traditional family structures have dramatically increased the number of female-headed households, which range from 16 percent of total rural households in the Near East, to 60 percent in certain parts of Africa, and number well over 7 million in Asia and the Pacific. The range within regions is widespread as recent studies in the Near-East Region show; the number of female-headed households ranges from 25 percent in Pakistan to 13 percent in Cyprus to 6.1 percent in Syria.[13] These phenomena have also contributed to the "feminization of agriculture", that is, the increased concentration of agricultural tasks in the hands of rural women.

79. When households must generate additional earnings or confront a decrease in access to services due to economic crisis, structural adjustment programmes or loss of resources, it is generally women who must mobilize their energies to compensate. Policies on poverty, agriculture, land reform, settlement and structural adjustment do not generally consider rural men and women's differential conditions and needs, nor are the differential policy impacts on men and women considered. Rural poverty will only be alleviated if these issues are recognized and fully integrated into policy and programme design, implementation and evaluation.

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[13] FAO Regional Office for the Near East Country Reports prepared for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Rural women, environment and access to land tenure

80. Women's roles as environmental managers and as key actors in achieving sustainable development were emphasized in the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (NFLS) and further highlighted in the 1991 FAO/Netherlands "Den Bosch" Conference on Agriculture and the Environment and in the UN Conference on Environment and Development, and in the adoption of Agenda 21, notably Chapter 24, "Global Action for Women Towards Sustainable and Equitable Development." Rural women's technical knowledge of sustainable resource use in soil and water conservation and management, pest management, forest use and conservation, and plant and animal genetic resource management needs to be recognized.

TABLE 3
Percentage of ownership of cultivated land by women farmers in four selected countries

Ownership of land	Thailand	Trinidad	Nigeria	Syria
Personally owned	22.50	8.75	4.38	-
Husband's land	38.75	30.00	23.00	41.25
Gift from husband	-	-	30.11	-
Family land	10.00	8.75	11.88	36.25
Government land	-	25.00	-	-
Communal land	-	-	20.00	-
Squatted land	-	8.75	-	-
Rented land	28.75	18.75	10.63	22.50

(Source: Manju Dutta Das, FAO 1995).

81. Many rural women, in many developing countries, lack access to land or have insecure land tenure. It is their husbands, fathers and brothers who hold land title, a practice which essentially eliminates their eligibility for formal sources of credit or membership in farmers' organizations, which could enable them to gain access to inputs that can help stabilize or enhance their production systems. Rural women's access to agricultural extension services worldwide is only about 1/20th of that of men, a point further elaborated in Section 5.

82. It is highly probable that having a large number of children continues to be a major asset and source of immediate and long-term social and economic security for poor rural women, especially in the least-developed countries. This is reflected by the high value placed on child labour in the absence of labour-saving home and farm technologies and of social safety nets. UNCED and ICPD (international Conference on Population and Development) both recognized the importance of the status of women in changing reproductive behaviour and fertility levels, and, ultimately, population growth trends.

Gender-responsive policy and planning

83. A better understanding of the impact of macro-economic policies on rural women is needed. Unfortunately, research on the impact on women of structural adjustment reforms in agricultural and rural development per se has been thin, despite the fact that establishing the linkages mentioned above requires a robust information system. Thus, many analysts, planners, and policy-makers are unaware of the implications for disadvantaged populations of varying policy decisions in agriculture and rural development. Also, there is a dearth of macro-economic policy specialists with social and gender expertise. And relevant data and indicators are lacking - especially as regards the full extent of rural women's productive, farm household, and community roles. Moreover, in developing countries the conceptualization, collection, and analysis of gender-disaggregated data on rural people are inadequate.[14] Women's participation in organizations - including grassroots groups, professional associations, NGOs, and networks - is vital for political advocacy to win equity in development and improve women's social and economic status.

Progress achieved

84. While progress in the advancement of the status of rural women world-wide is difficult to measure due to the lack of reliable data, statistics and indicators, there is evidence, particularly over the last five years, which indicates that progress has occurred, although limited in scope. According to the UNDP report: female life expectancy has increased 20 percent faster than that of males; females have advanced nearly twice as fast in adult literacy and combined school enrolment in the developing world; more than half the women in the developing world now use modern contraceptives and their fertility rate has fallen from 5.4 in 1970-75 to 3.6 in 1990-95.

85. Increased global awareness of the gender implications for development is gradually producing change at all levels, thus eroding gender bias and focusing attention on interrelated processes that contribute to poverty, food insecurity and environmental degradation. Networking and alliance-building among rural women and their advocates in NGOs, government ministries and development agencies have given rise to the creation of national and international fora on the advancement of women, cited above.

86. The introduction of conventions, agreements, new legislation, policies and programmes has been a critical step towards increasing women's access to and control over productive resources. However, most often, rural people remain unaware of women's legal rights or have little legal recourse if rights are violated.

87. New programmes have also sought to promote the participation of women in decision-making at various levels, in part through the creation of national women's organizations and the institutionalization of WID units within technical ministries. This has been an important step in ensuring that women's issues are placed on the national policy agenda. However, due to technical weaknesses, restricted access to financial and human resources, and limited direct participation of intended beneficiaries, the direct impact of many such initiatives on rural women has often been lower than expected.

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[14] See discussion in Introduction of recent WCARRD data collection activities that address this problem.

SEWA in India

SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association) is a membership-based trade union of about 50 000 members of self-employed women. All of SEWA's work focuses on how to better the lives of poor women economically, and socially and to make them more self-reliant.

SEWA organized the women of Banaskantha district to be part of the Government of India's DWCRA (Development of Women and Children in Rural Area) programme. This programme's main goal is to bring about change in the quality of life of poor women and their children through increased income. Through the identification of income-generating activities many rural women gained employment; presently 7 000 women are engaged in sustain work and employment.

SEWA so far has organized 42 DWCRA groups under different activities in Radhanpur and Santalpur talukas, and they have been federated into a District-level Association: The "Banaskantha DWCRA Mahila SEWA Association". This association provides assistance in production, marketing, training, credit and other services.

Presently, DWCRA, through the women, is focusing also on changing the perception of government officials that its programmes are no longer welfare but empowerment orientated.

(Source: Nanavaty, SEWA Academy 1994).

88. NGOs and community-based organizations, have often been the first to recognize the critical roles and needs of rural women, and therefore have had a significant impact on the development process and on the agenda of the development community. This success can be attributed in part to their effectiveness in reaching rural women and in giving them a voice in the decision-making process.

Progress on the advancement of the status of rural women has not been systematic enough to reverse the processes leading to the feminization of poverty and agriculture, to food insecurity and to reducing the burden women shoulder from environmental degradation. In fact, the persistence of policies that have adverse impacts on rural women are, in many parts of the world, slowing progress or producing reversals of previous progress related to maternal and child mortality rates, female reproductive health and nutrition, access to productive resources and training, and educational status.

SECTION 5
EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EXTENSION

Main points

Basic education, often referred to as literacy and numeracy education, is an essential component for achieving socio-economic development. Education is not only a universal right, but also a means for improving the knowledge, skills and attitudes of individuals and the development capacity of societies.

- Both formal and non-formal education, for men and women, are closely related to productivity in agriculture.
- It is now widely acknowledged that participatory approaches to extension improve its responsiveness to farmers' problems.

Education lays the foundation for increasing people's abilities to acquire and process information, broadens their perspective and understanding and increases their self-reliance. It also increases the efficiency of training and extension services. Education is a means of reducing poverty by increasing production, efficiency and income, as well as for empowering the disadvantaged groups of a population.

The impact of fiscal constraint

Education pays

A study of education in developing countries showed that farmers completing four years of elementary education had on average 8.7 percent higher productivity.[1] Another study found that one additional year of schooling adds about 2.5 percent to farm output.[2] More recently, analysis shows that in East Asia one additional year of education contributed over 3 percent to real GDP.[3]

1. Jamison and Lau, 1982
2. Chau and Lau, 1987
3. Lau, Jamison and Louat, 1991

89. Most Member Nations report rising enrolment rates in these past five years in both primary and secondary level education. Unfortunately, many countries report reduced expenditure in education due to fiscal deficits. Increasing school enrolments and reduced government expenditure in education, has resulted in a decline in quality and efficiency of the educational system in many Member Nations.

90. Most statistics, however, indicate only enrolment rates, neglecting until recently the number of school leavers. Many children from poor families enrol and shortly after drop-out for either family or economic reasons. Primary among the economic reasons is the high opportunity cost of sending children to school. These opportunity costs weigh heavily in the household decisions regarding labour and food allocation, especially for poor families in rural areas. The World Food Programme has been working successfully with Member Nations on initiatives to keep children in schools. For example, WFP operates School Feeding Programmes in many countries to specifically attract students, reduce drop-out rates and improve the nutritional status of children.

Female education and development

91. There can be little doubt that investing in female education is essential to promote economic growth. Studies show that female education can improve productivity, health, nutrition, natural resource management and family planning. Educated mothers have smaller, healthier families, and tend to have higher incomes and encourage the education of both sons and daughters.[15]

92. Member Nations report that, in general, female enrolment at primary, secondary and university level has increased over the last five years. Women's enrolment in agricultural subjects in the African region has also increased. In Benin, for instance, there has been an 8 percent total increase since 1990. Data reported from Congo showed that in 1984 34 percent of enroled students in specialised agricultural schools and courses were women; this has increased to 53 percent in 1989 (A Synthesis Report: Women in the Africa Region 1995). In the last ten years in Africa, women's enrolment in agricultural studies has increased from 15 percent to 24 percent of the total enrolment.[16] Although some progress in female enrolment in educational programmes has been made, it is still insufficient in comparison to males in many Member Nations. The social development benefits to be derived form female education are still an unrealized potential.

93. Although the research shows that the returns on investing in female education are high (exceeding the return for males in social issues), female under-enrolment persists because of perceived low income returns to girls' schooling and cultural biases. OECD[17] identified the following issues as key elements in promoting the participation of females in education: early childhood care; availability of schools closer to the communities; decentralization and localization of education.

Constraints to female education

Today, there are still factors that inhibit female education in many developing countries:

There is still a lack of awareness on the part of policy-makers, governments, agencies and the population at large regarding the important benefits educating women can achieve.

Lack of adequate schools close to communities increases the reluctance of families to educate daughters.

The cost of education in many countries is unaffordable for many rural families, and as a result they do not send their daughters to school.

Perceived high opportunity costs of sending girls to school, including chore time and daughters and mother's forgone earnings; for poorer families in rural areas the costs are likely to be higher since females tend to make a greater contribution to family welfare.

Lack of role models for young women: especially female teachers and other professionals.

Culture, traditional practices and religion in many cases do not foster the education of women, often constraining them to the home environment.

Agricultural extension and training

94. Throughout the 1980s many governments reduced their public expenditures in extension in spite of the increasing number of people active in agriculture. In Africa spending related to agriculture and extension fell by 50 percent during this period, reducing not only extension coverage but also the quality. Today, two out of three farmers in Africa have no contact with extension services. In Asia the number is three out of four. In Latin American is six out of seven and in the Near East five out of six. In many agricultural systems a considerable, if not the major, portion of

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[15] OECD Report, 1992.
[16] FAO Directory of Agricultural Education Institutions in Africa, 1995.
[17] OECD Report, 1992.

farm work is done by women, yet there is a low number of female extension officers - women constitute only 12.3 percent of extension workers in Africa. Women farmers report that they are often neglected by extension workers, especially male extension workers. Data from the 1989 FAO Global Consultation on Agricultural Extension showed that in the reporting developing countries 6 percent of extension agent's time and resources are devoted to large commercial farmers; 26 percent to smaller commercial farmers; 24 percent to subsistence farmers; and 6 percent to farm women.

95. The low level of training of a large portion of extension workers is an issue which needs to be addressed in developing countries: there continues to be a shortage of trained manpower in fields related to agriculture despite the progress that has been made in the last three decades. About 39 percent of extension personnel worldwide had only secondary school level qualifications or less; 33 percent were trained at intermediate level; 23 percent at first university degree level; and slightly more than 5 percent had postgraduate qualifications. In developing countries the profile is significantly lower.[18]

Agricultural extension: new approaches

96. During the 1970s extension services were characterized by a top-down technology transfer approach. In the 1980s many developing countries followed the Training and Visit System (T&V) extension approach recommended by the World Bank. More recently, emphasis has been placed on the need for more participatory methods in extension, including farmer participation in the planning and implementation of programmes. Initially introduced on a large scale by donors, NGOs and technical assistance organizations through programmes like the FAO-supported Small Farmer Development Programme (SFDP) and People's Participation Programme during the 1980s and the USAID-FAO supported Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and the IFAD-supported P4K Programme in Indonesia during the early 1990s, these approaches are now spreading rapidly to other countries in Asia and Africa and are beginning to catch the attention of agricultural extension agencies who are looking for more cost-effective ways to reduce extension delivery and farmer training costs.

Various strategies have been designed to improve extension services and lower cost

- Organizing active farmers' groups: in order to ensure effective participation and to accelerate technology dissemination, skills and knowledge;
- Working more with groups for greater efficiency and effectiveness; farmer-to-farmer extension to take advantage of existing local knowledge and the fact that farmers borrow new ideas when they see other farmers using them;
- Strengthening the technical content: content should be validated and tested with farmers and targeted to the appropriate groups;
- Reviewing extension strategies and programmes with farmers' groups: there should a constant update of programmes through feedback from farmers;
- Improving communication: using a mix of media channels to disseminate information to target groups;
- Strengthening extension management: management information systems should be used to monitor performance and improve programmes and;
- Improving pre-service and in-service training for the front-line extension staff.

[18] Report of the Global Consultation on Agricultural Extension, FAO 1989.

97. Extension services in developing countries are often in a weak bargaining position vis-a-vis other pressing national concerns which are often dominated by policies which favour urban consumers. With the move towards structural adjustment policies and the privatization of production enterprises and services, there has been an increasing involvement of the private sector in providing extension services. Privatization of these services is undoubtedly most appropriate where farmers are using technologically advanced technologies and have the money to hire special services to protect their investments. In many developing countries the rural poor, the landless, female head-households and women farmers are likely to lack sufficient capital or credit to pay for private services. This is especially true for those who depend on subsistence agriculture as a means of survival. Yet they are the very population most in need of public financed extension.

98. Extension services are no longer viewed as exclusively providing information in agricultural methods. Target groups are not restricted only to farmers, but cover a larger audience of women and rural youths. In the last decade, increased emphasis has been placed on educating youths on effects of rapid population growth, leadership development, skill training for participation in income-generating activities, HIV/AIDS and environmental protection. Increasingly environmental and sustainable development issues are being incorporated into agricultural education and extension programmes. Sustainable agricultural development demands more complex advice and information from extension services to match the complexity of increased production and environmental protection. The targeting of extension programmes highlights gender issues, the specific needs of the rural poor and the importance of youths as the next generation of farm producers. A rethinking of extension approaches, especially with more emphasis on participatory processes, necessarily has implications for training extension workers. Training in problem-solving and communication is needed as well as a fuller appreciation of farmers' existing knowledge about their environment and farming systems.